

**A STUDY OF THE SUBJECT OF NATIONAL HEALING AND
RECONCILIATION IN SELECTED PLAYS AT THE KENYA
NATIONAL DRAMA FESTIVAL 2008-2010.**

BY

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my deceased father, Alex Odipo, who first introduced me to theatre performance.

Dad, I am still the teacher you wanted me to be.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Healing: A curative process aimed at restoring healthy relations among individuals or groups previously involved in a disagreement.

Illocutionary: the force of action that an utterance bears.

Locutionary: the meaning inherent in an utterance

Performance: An enactment of drama in a fictional world before spectators with an aim of influencing in one way or the other the very spectators.

Performance-text: the mechanisms by which a theatre material is availed to an audience.

Perlocutionary: the effect induced upon a hearer by an utterance.

Reconciliation: A process of transforming hard feelings between parties which hitherto had been engaged in conflict into a situation of tolerance through justice, restitution, expiation or absolution.

Theme: a virtuous proposition, principle or idea that emanates from a performance-text.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DVD- Digital Video Discs

KICD- Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

KNDF- Kenya National Drama Festival

KHRC- Kenya Human Rights Commission

NCIC- National Cohesion and Integration Commission

NDR- National Dialogue and Reconciliation

NGO- Non Governmental Organizations

PEV-Post Election Violence

TJRC- Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission

UN- United Nations

UNCHR – United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights

ABSTRACT

Utilizing Kenya Schools and Colleges' Drama Festival theatre space, this study investigates the use of theatre as a strategy for healing and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict. On the assumption that plays performed at the festival are mimetic of real life, this study purposively sampled four plays performed between 2008 and 2010 in relation to calls for healing and reconciliation following Kenya's 2007/2008 post-election violence. The performance-texts are *Messiah* (2008) by Joseph Murungu, *The Broken Pot* (2010) by Wenceslaus Masinde, *Forty Minutes* (2008) by Nelson Ashitiva and *Barabbas* (2009) by Ondiech Malala. The use of qualitative research design enabled an in-depth understanding of the performance-texts which were segmented and analyzed in terms of: the narrative content, actors/actresses performance and productions techniques. This study is founded on two theories: one, aspects of theatre performance theory as propounded, largely, by Richard Schechner and, secondly, J.L Austin's speech act theory. Common to these two theories is the concept of performativity. While the former provided a schema for segmenting the performance-texts for purposes of analysis, the latter's notion that utterances perform actions was instrumental in evaluating stage dialogue about healing and reconciliation. Performance analysis applied to texts selected in this study returned a result that the performers stirred critical consciousness among the spectators through their manipulation of voice, body and environmental factors. Through the narrative content, these performance-texts engage the spectators in the process of healing and reconciliation by identifying the ills and their sources, and by offering prescriptions which restore healthy relations. In the whole range of renewal of the individual and the collective are issues such as: memory, truth, acknowledgement, reparation, transitional justice, expiation, forgiveness, healing and reconciliation. This study foregrounds a persuasion that Kenya Schools and Colleges' Drama Festival provides a platform through which, among other social issues, endeavours of national healing and reconciliation were augmented after Kenya's 2007/2008 post-election violence. This study recommends a theatre for reconciliation that combines the mimetic and transformational functions. For practitioners, scholars and in service for mankind, this study adds to the knowledge base at the confluence between theatre and conflict management.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the following: background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, research assumptions, rational and significance, and scope and limitations. The chapter reviews relevant literature in the fields of drama, theatre, film, healing and reconciliation, and conflict management. Further, appropriateness of both performance theory and speech act theory to this study is explained. Finally, the chapter discusses the research methodology with regard to population and sampling, data collection and data analysis.

1.2 Background to the study

The 2007 general elections in Kenya led to a ruinous blowback following the contestation of the outcome of the presidential election as announced by the then Electoral Commission of Kenya. The country witnessed an orgy of violence as an immediate aftermath. By the time of its cessation, the divide along ethnic and political alignments was already deep. To help subjugate the immediate post-election violence, the International Community, through former United Nations (UN) General Secretary - Kofi Annan - anchored a National Dialogue and Reconciliation (NDR) process, which led to a power-sharing arrangement and a national accord between the then warring political camps.

Just like the call for cessation of hostilities at the height of conflict had been eclectic in nature, so have been efforts aimed at restoration. The search for sustainable mechanisms of dealing with the ripples of such disputes within healing and reconciliation framework so spelt in the National Accord and Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) has attracted a number of scholarly studies

(Megan 2012, Waheire 2013, Ndungu 2008, Klopp & Githinji 2010) most of which are on the contribution of the political class, religious groups and the civil society. However, there is limited literature on the contribution of theatre performances particularly that of Kenya Schools and Colleges' Drama Festivals (KNDF) towards post conflict reconciliation in Kenya. The need to examine the utilization of theatre space in response to the call for national healing and reconciliation prompted this study.

KNDF was founded in 1959 as a co-curriculum activity and to date continues to serve, among other functions, as a platform through which unity, harmony and peaceful coexistence are fostered (KNDF Rules and Regulations 2006, 2013). The festival is organized annually by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology with its calendar mainly running between January and April. According to Osiako (2004), the festival has been utilized as “a tool to promote, propagate and nurture our [Kenya's] values as a nation” (p.3). Over the years, these values have informed the plays, verses, dances, narratives and lately the films presented. Issues tackled are often contemporary and as expounded by Njageh (2009:18), “the prevailing sociopolitical, economic, religious, technological, and cultural factors have greatly influenced the trend of festival's themes.”

A cursory thematic look at the previous plays performed at the festival shows a history replete with concerted engagement with challenges affecting (Kenyan) society. Various KNDF adjudication reports (2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010) cite issues such as corruption, gender, leadership, international relations, female genital mutilation, drug abuse, peace, healing and reconciliation as those handled by festival plays. These themes are topical and largely draw from the prevailing real life

circumstances. Indeed, KNDF provides a window to engage the spectators on the “reaction of the society to various issues of concern” (Osiako, 2004, p.3). Subsequently, the central question that this study addressed itself to is how the festival plays performed between 2008 and 2010, as performance-texts, responded to the 2007/2008 PEV.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Though not a hard and fast rule, productions in a particular year are generally expected to explore a given theme. This study interrogates how the performance-texts under study explore the issue of national healing and reconciliation which was a running theme for 2008, 2009 and 2010 festivals.

Further, the Adjudicators’ Report for the 2008 KNDF says, “Owing to the unprecedented post-election violence that rocked this nation, many teams depicted peace and reconciliation which was compatible and relevant to the festival theme” (p.1). The veracity of this proposition can be questioned by evaluating, in this case, how the sampled performance-texts treat the theme of national healing and reconciliation. By focusing on these performance-texts’ narrative contents, acting process and staging techniques, this inquiry examines the edutainment and transformative viabilities of theatre in relation to healing and reconciliation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Primarily, this probe sought to establish the tenability of foregrounding a persuasion that schools and colleges’ drama festival provides a platform through which, among other social issues, endeavours of national healing and reconciliation

can be augmented. In pursuit of this central concern were three specific objectives; to:

- i. Examine narrative contents of the selected performance-texts in so far as national healing and reconciliation is concerned.
- ii. Analyse the acting process in respect to national healing and reconciliation.
- iii. Interrogate the staging elements used in these performance-texts in trying to achieve national healing and reconciliation.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. How does the dramatic conflict around which the narrative is woven in the selected texts bear on national healing and reconciliation?
- ii. Do the performers' actions and reactions in terms of dialogue and body language enhance national healing and reconciliation?
- iii. As artistic production choices; how are the staging elements of costumes, music, lighting, props, and décor used in the selected performance-texts to disseminate messages for national healing and reconciliation?

1.6 Research Assumptions

The study was founded on the assumptions that:

- i. The narratives and the dramatic conflicts of the performance-texts draw from society and they make calls for national healing and reconciliation.

- ii. Through words and actions, the performers acting on stage effectively communicate messages of national healing and reconciliation.
- iii. The staging elements used in the performance-texts supplement the performers' endeavours to address issues of national healing and reconciliation.

1.7 Rationale and Significance

As a construct of society, theatre is obliged to help shape it. The view that "theatre not only mirrors the roles human beings take in their respective societies but also plays an important part in changing the way we see ourselves" (Arnold, 1998, p.53) lends credence to the school of thought that theatre has a role to play in influencing human behavior and perception. Theatre and performance theorists (Alter, 1990; Carlson, 1996; Eliam, 2003; Pavis, 2003; Rozik, 1997; Schechner, 2002) posit that theatre draws from society's mini dramas and that the conflicts on stage not only mirror but also interrogate conflicts as experienced in real life. The audience, in the view of the aforementioned theorists, has a role in the generating of meaning of a performance-text. One such task for the spectator is to take a lesson from stage re-enactments because this learning "is assumed to be relevant and close to real life" (Bagshaw et.al, 2005, p.118).

To the extent that this analysis is on healing and reconciliation in theatre performances makes this study broach on two domains of knowledge: conflict reconciliation and theatre. On the existence of conflict, which is a concept central to drama and reconciliation processes, both disciplines seem to concur on the need for a return to normalcy after a situation of conflict. This return to normalcy can be mediated creatively. Theatre and conflict management, Bagshaw et.al (2005:111)

note, “have emerged as components of a broader progressive and humanistic approach to building a more humane world” (p.111). These commonalities in structure and function provide the framework upon which this study is modeled. By integrating theatrical language in healing and reconciliation processes, post conflict resolution management not only adds to its alternative means but also becomes more comprehensive than if left on its own.

Using KNDF space as a site for mediating reconciliation would be a microcosm of undertakings possible in the entire Kenyan society. Because theatre is often entertaining thereby enabling greater retention of messages by the audience (Mugubi and Kebaya, 2012), its use and its study in respect to social issues offer art and aesthetics over and above other non-artistic media forms through which social issues can be negotiated. Even against other artistic genres, theatre’s flexibility to incorporate spectators in performance allows for reflective moments which would challenge both individual and collective choices apparent not just in the imagined world but also in real life circumstances. Theatre and conflict management are endeavours which are aimed at conflict transformation; the former providing a safe site for probing hard questions about conflict situations in the latter.

KNDF theatre space has attracted limited studies. While Otieno (2000) explores gender roles and style in the festival’s plays, Chetambe (2012) examines the representation of female characters in the festival’s contemporary narrative genre. Tsikhungu (2008) conducts a thematic analysis of selected plays performed at the festival which is a precursor to the research at hand which now focuses on a single theme: national healing and reconciliation. Thus, an in-depth understanding of

the functionality of KNDF as a theatre space for spearheading healing and reconciliation is highlighted by this research.

In a 2009 examination of KNDF as a tool for peace education in secondary schools in Nairobi, Njageh acknowledges that drama is a powerful arts-based tool for learning about peace and facilitating coexistence among people. Whereas Njageh's (2009) study is more concerned with the offstage roles of the festival towards peace education, the current qualitative research injects into the realms of theatre and post conflict reconciliation an understanding based on analyses of stage performances. So far and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the theme of post conflict healing and reconciliation in a performance-text at KNDF remains unexploited by academic research studies. The current investigation is therefore situated to fill this academic interstice.

Majority of the performers at the primary and secondary schools are children, going by the 2007 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) definition of children as persons below 18 years of age. Primary and secondary levels have performers who are in their formative ages. Kenya's vision 2030 can be boosted if the young artists of primary and secondary schools, and the young adult performers of the tertiary institutions for whom the future belongs, are ably initiated into peaceful coexistence. The festival gives that window and this research expands the knowledge base about theatre for healing and reconciliation.

For the period under study, participants communicated by use of various dramatic forms: plays, dances, verses, mimes and singing games. This inquiry is on the play category and the choice of this genre is purposive. Further, the interactive nature of the dramatic dialogue facilitates discourse among participants hence its

suitability as a mode of interaction. Based on findings, useful recommendations have been made with a view to adding value to the lives and operations of the Kenyan populace and those in leadership positions. Hopefully, an improved understanding of the place of theatre in reliving human lives in respect to post conflict reconstruction shall be gained.

1.8 Delimitations

The choices of plays under this study were limited only to those performed at the national level of KNDF between 2008 and 2010. For a piece to reach the national level, adjudicators use a number of parameters defined by KNDF. Each category has its own evaluation criteria and so is the play genre. It is therefore deducible that a piece could have reached the national level out of considerations not limited to the theme of healing and reconciliation. Conversely, a piece on healing and reconciliation might not have reached the national level of competition. Such, weretherefore not under considerations for sampling. In addition, sampling was partly guided by synopses of these performance-texts as captured in the official programmes. However, the programmes do not have synopses of some plays. Subsequently, this study makes an excuse for not considering such for sampling.

Because personal memory of the researcher of how these plays were actualized on stage may not have been enough or could have even biased, the study mainly relied, for its analysis, on Digital Video Discs (DVD) as recorded by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). Cameras are confining in terms of camera angles and points of view. Again, post-production editing sometimes distorts reality.

1.9 Literature Review

This research reviewed books, scholarly journals and papers on the place of theatre in society. Reviews of secondary texts on theatre as platforms for peace and reconciliation were conducted. Reviews were also done on texts about peace, healing and reconciliation. Of use too has been information from agencies like KNHR, TJRC, and National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) with regard to trends. Ferreting messages of reconciliation in Kenya's theatrical works of art is hinged on the understanding that various studies (Boal, 1979; Gerrit 2010; Odhiambo, 2004; Sofoworo, 2008) have shown that theatre can be used to communicate developmental issues in society.

1.9.1 Theatre, Healing and Reconciliation

World over, and spanning centuries, theatre has been used as an intervention tool for healing and reconciliation in post conflict societies. The Greek dramas were often laced with moral undertones, for instance, Sophocles King Oedipus, is capable of evoking cathartic effect on the audience so as to wish a transformation in behaviour that could change the course for the tragic hero. Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice is a discourse on race and religious bigotry prevalent in Europe back then and how best to reconstitute society in the aftermath. Theatre plays laced with peace messages were popular intervention measures in the violent conflicts in former Yugoslavia and targeted the different ethnic, formerly enemy, groups for reconciliation (Schweitzer, 2009). In post war Bosnia- Herzegovina was developed "a theatre and drama in education program that works with teachers and students to use theatre as a tool for peace building" (Zelizer, 2003, p.8). Such programs brought

the youth together and served therapeutic purposes too. Kenyan theatre scene can avail these options to the populace.

Upon the fall of apartheid system, the new government in South Africa formed a truth and reconciliation committee to heal the populace from the past injustices. Theatre performance practitioners, creative writers and literary scholars continue to give their assessment of the truth and reconciliation process in South Africa. In a study of two post-apartheid plays: Nothing but the Truth by John Kani and The Bells of Amersfoort by Zakes Mda, Mekusi (2010) interrogates the use of public space in negotiating nation-building through truth and reconciliation's dramatic spheres. His reading shows how "art has been dually deployed to re-enact a public space" (p.8). By this duality, Mekusi reads a mixed reaction to the issue of reconciliation especially by the masses in the two texts under his study. This study gains from his calls for the use of pragmatic approaches in order to achieve genuine amnesty, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The post-independent Zimbabwe has had political upheavals including those emanating from disputed election results. In a study of the play; *Healing of the Wounds*, Tonderai (2011) audits "the faithful dramatization of the meaning of healing and reconciliation for the ordinary man in the [Zimbabwean] streets" (p.6). The title of the play is in itself an admixture of a concession that there is an injury and that there is need to clean the wounds. Tonderai faults Healing the Wounds for only "giving women and ordinary rural folk a critical voice, but does not take it further by giving the same power to the audience during or after the performance" (p.40). The present research equally examines how the performance-texts under study incorporated the audiences who watched these pieces in their reconciliation

endeavours. Further, this study identifies the wounds not for the mere sake of it but more for the reason that in fully understanding the pathos; healing process would be more meaningful.

Artistic responses to the Rwandan genocide have seen the contribution of film and theatre, among other media forms, toward advancement of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation. In the study of theatre performances staged by National University of Rwanda's Centre for The Arts, Kalisa (2006) shows how such texts preserve the memory and creates a path to reconciliation. Her study shows that "social theatre in Rwanda, as it is in other conflict areas, becomes a theatre of reconciliation, of debate, and of ideas" (p. 518). Kalisa's study on the contribution of theatre by an educational institution lends credence to the present study which researches on a festival theatre as exclusively performed by schools and colleges. The purpose is therefore to look at the role young artists in formal educational institutions can play through theatre insofar as post-conflict healing and reconciliation is concerned.

There is a proposition that pacification, sacrifice and cleansing of those who participate in war were, within the African ritual drama context, ways of forestalling future eruptions of violence. Okello (2011) documents the African ritual theatre as a means of cleansing and pacifying the ex-Lord's Resistance Army returnees. He writes, "The Acholi women express peace messages in their songs...dance and drama" (p. 226). The aims of such songs, Okello notes, were twofold: "to provide space for grieving the past and orienteering towards the future" (p.226). Taking an African strategy toward an African problem is an insight Okello's work lends to the current study. However, Outa (2009) questions this African gesture of forgiveness

and finds it inadmissible in the circumstances presented in Oby Obyerodhiambo's play Drumbeats. In its resolution, according to Outa, Drumbeats veers "towards the route of escape from a disturbing reality" [of reconstitution in Kenya] (p.70). Given the differing opinions, this current study puts to focus reconciliation approaches used by KNDF theatre practitioners weighing the dramatic strategies against the prevailing realities in post 2007/2008 skirmishes in Kenya.

1.9.2 Healing and Reconciliation: The Kenyan Context

In response to Kenya's 2007/2008 PEV, the international community mediated a political truce which led to the signing of an agreement between the warring political groups. The National Accord paved way for the creation of TJRC in 2009 to promote peace, justice, national unity, healing, and reconciliation among the people of Kenya. In 2008, NCIC was established to promote cohesion and integration by outlawing any forms of discrimination. All these efforts were largely made by the political class in trying to harmonize the Kenyan society.

The National Accord notwithstanding, the situation remained fluid and "tension remained high and was structured primarily along ethnic lines" (Megan, 2012, p.3). Other players like the religious organizations stepped forward to help improve human relations. Mugubi and Kebaya (2012) say that over time, the church has organized "activities that promote intercommunity peace and harmony" (p.109). In the study on how the church can integrate justice and reconciliation in response to the ethno-political violence in Kenya by Kaberia (2013), integration of traditional African approaches with the contemporary practices so as to reconcile man with self, society and God is rooted for. In a study of the perceived role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in Kenyan reconciliation, Megan (2012) elucidates the

“NGO’s role in quelling the violence and their work in trying to rebuild the country” (p.40). Nebe (2013), TJRC volume 2A1 Report (2013), TJRC volume 2B Report (2013),and Waheire (2013) all document efforts made by the civil society toward reconciling the Kenyan society following the PEV of 2007/2008.

There is a growing literature detailing the contribution of theatre towards national healing and reconciliation. Amollo (2002) explains the activities of Amani People’s Theatre as a tool through which the youth apply their drama skills to situations of conflict transformation and peace building. Amollo highlights use of games, comedy and storytelling as some of the techniques used by Amani People’s Theatre to help participants challenge violence and enhance transformation. Part of the task at hand for the current research is to decode theatrical mechanisms employed in handling healing and reconciliation in the performance-texts under study. Although Amani Peoples Theatre is a community based organization, its principles especially those concerning memory, transformation and vision are pertinent to the study at hand.

In the2013 qualitative research on the use of theatre for prevention of violence in Kenya, Irinasays, “For social and subject transformation to happen there is need to deal with the root cause of the violence” (p.34).Irina foregrounds ethnic hatred as the root cause of the violence that was witnessed in Kenya. The present study examines how the selected performances address these root causes. Irina’s view that “theatre provokes and compels the spectators to turn into spect-actors and to interact, act and participate in a way that transcends boundaries” (p.34) marries with Mekusi(2010),Odhiambo(2004) Tonderai (2013) who also call for interactivity between the actors and the audience in order to provoke reflective meditation. Their

collective view that audience involvement in the performance of a text enhances behavioural change is premised on Augusto Boal's (1979) theatre of the oppressed strategies and techniques. In the theory and practice of theatre performance, the wall between the performer and the spectator is blurry (Schechner 2002, 2003). Consequently, this reading examines how the sampled texts' narratives, dialogues, movement and production techniques prod the audience into conciliatory thoughts and actions.

As already noted, there is a growing literature on the use of theatre as a non-violent strategy for healing and reconciliation in post-conflict societies. Irina (2012), Mda (2002), Njageh (2009), Odhiambo and Nkaelah (2008), and Zelizer (2003) concur that theatre and the arts in general help with the healing and integration of the inner and outer worlds in post conflict societies. Equally, Nykon (2011) argues for the diffusion of conflict resolution principles to the public through dramatic entertainment. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2011) similarly argue for the use of "the arts [including theatre] and popular culture in conflict resolution" (p.358). The present study is guided by these earlier works and does recommend on how such efforts can be improved in order to spur creativity in conflict resolutions in societies including the Kenyan one.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily based on theatre performance theory and to an extent draws from linguistic speech act theory. From a performance theory standpoint, this study examines; how the performance-texts make meaning in respect to the issue of healing and reconciliation, and the potential signification of such meanings to society. The speech act theory provides the framework for understanding

characters' dramatic dialogue that impact on healing and reconciliation. This section first provides an outline of performance theory before turning to speech act theory.

1.10.1 Performance Theory

Performance theory is at the core of performance studies; a relatively new discipline. Having studied theatre, Richard Schechner - the founder of performance theory- expanded the application of the term 'performance' from theatre to other human activities. Schechner proposed a concept of performance which transcends text-based drama and embraces the formal relations between play, sports, theatre and ritual. To a varying degree, Schechner says that these human activities have common strands: time, performance space, objects, non-productivity and rules. As such, the divide between theatre studies and performance studies is thin.

Semantically, the term 'performance' is in itself very fluid. Goffman (1959) defines performance as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any other participant" (p.15). Schechner (2002) uses the term 'performance' in a broad spectrum to refer to any action in human activity: everyday life, sports, business, sex, ritual, and play. Observably, a performance is marked by the intentional activity, space and the audience. However, the application of the term 'performance' to other activities other than theatre is not the concern of this study. Instead, this study attempts to explain theatre performance, which Schechner (2002) defines as "the enactment of dramas by actors on a stage" (p.15), as manifestations of everyday life insofar as healing and reconciliation is concerned.

Performance theorists look at performance as 'a restored behaviour.' Performances in everyday life and artistic life consist of "a recombination of already

behaved behaviours” (Schechner, 2002, p.28). In the logic of restored behaviour, performance is but a repetition of some original. Theatre performance is therefore an imitation; a reliving of human lives in “a marked, framed or heightened way” (Schechner, 2002, p.28). The performance-texts under this study are marked say by aesthetics, framed by means of theatre codes and heightened enactments which stand out uniquely over and above every day non-theatrical activities. To the extent that these performances were inspired by Kenya’s 2007/2008 PEV, they remain ‘shows’ where performers try to redo the actions of that past.

In the sense of restored behaviour, theatre performance is symbolic and reflexive (Schechner, 2002). This presupposes that a performance is more likely to be understood or enjoyed by those who understand its codes; language. The reflexive nature of performance signals a study of reception and because reflection is anticipated, the issue of the audience readily comes to focus. According to Schechner, “Reflexivity in theatre goes hand in hand with audience participation” (2003, p.131). This study fathoms audience in three ways: the spectators, the stage audience and the researcher. In respect to the audience, this study describes how performers on stage, as recipients of symbols, react to those particular messages. Even though auditorium spectators are not under this study, the potentiality of transmitted messages to impact on them is considered. Consequently, their reflexive reactions either spontaneously during a performance or afterwards would contribute meaning to these performances.

Performance Theory, just like theatre semiotics, situates each performance within a context. Theatre draws its material from the society that inspires it (Carlson, 1996; Pavis, 1998; Schechner, 2002, 2003). Similarly, Alter (1990) says, “Performances always reflect those models of social behaviour that prevail in a given society” (p.1990). In as much as performance is restored behaviour, each performance is unique to its own circumstances whether social, cultural, ideological or theoretical. The uniqueness of a performance draws from the material of the place and the nuances of interactivity (Schechner 2002). A reading of performances at the KNDF is therefore anchored within theatre traditions, KNDF dogma, and the Kenyan society in the wake 2007/2008 PEV and what McAuley (1998) considers as the global context.

Performance is regarded as a time-space sequence occurring in three stages: proto-performance, performance and the aftermath. Schechner (2002, p.225-248) further breaks down and discusses these three into ten parts. The proto-performance stage which comprises training, workshop and rehearsal is the stage that precedes a performance. The mainstream performance is the public staging of the event; the actual performance on stage. Aftermath stage begins with the end of a performance, when the curtain falls. It is indefinite and is evidenced in the reaction of the spectators to a performance and their memory of it. These stages helped this investigation in comprehending the sampled performance-text’s narratives in the three ways: the proto stage helped in grasping the circumstances which led to violent conflicts, the performance stage in how the conflicts were manifested and the aftermath phase guided the call for healing and reconciliation.

Performances, especially the public ones, are rule governed. “Every performance, indeed every social interaction, is guided by a network of expectations and obligations” (Schechner, 2002, p.250). In a theatre performance, there are theatreconventions and courtesies which the producer and the receiver of art are privy to. Citing the example of Avant-garde movement in the arts, Schechner acknowledges that these rules or guidelines can be violated but only out of the urge for new creative conventions aimed at making human life better. KNDF has its own rules and regulations which are spelt in writing and are understood out of tradition. Society has its laws, rules and regulations which govern it and those who abuse them are reprimanded. Nation healing and reconciliation efforts derive from the urge to conform to social norms and achieving this through theatre requires adherence to theatre practices and techniques.

From a performance theory perspective, performance can also be studied as a quadruple relationship between: “Sourcers, producers, performers and partakers” (Schechner, 2002, p.250). In case of theatre performance, the above four can be substituted by: the playwright, director, actor/actress and the spectator respectively. The dramaturge’s concept is actualized by the performer through director’s invention. For Schechner, the actor on stage achieves the performance ‘actual’ through mimetic (imitation of reality) and transformational acting (arouses feeling both in the performer and the audience). The audience receive the performance; not in any dormant way but through interaction with the performance. All the four are connected and each role taker may belong to more than one of these categories. At the KNDF, the script writers often direct these performances and consume them as audience when they are staged. For this study, the connection that the performer

strikes with the spectator is crucial because it carries the force that can induce behaviour capable of creating varying emotions about conflict and healing.

Performance Theory, in the sense of Schechner, holds that there is a link between performance and ritual. For the case of theatre performance, Schechner states, "Theatre is a mixture, a braid of entertainment and ritual" (2003:162). For Schechner, there is no polarity between theatre and ritual with little variance only based in a performance context. Theatre puts on stage 'restored behaviour' observed in the rituals of real life behaviour. Theatre and ritual have interplay of aims: efficacy and entertainment. This research draws from the transformation role of ritual to help in the understanding of how the performance-texts under study make efforts aimed at transmuting behaviour. Using Schechner's (2008) notion that a ritual is binding, this study argues that gestures of reconciliation performed on a theatre stage can be binding to both the performers and the spectators. Among other functions, "Theatre should heal, teach, persuade or convince" (Schechner, 2002, p.38). These functions particularly the 'healing' function interests this research. Casting the healing and reconciliation task foregrounds, in this study, what Augusto Boal (1979, 2002) calls the power of theatre to effect social change.

Performance theorists perceive performance as an activity constituted by different parts that are none the less united in communicating a wholesome message. According to Schechner, each element in a performance matrix speaks its language but "all elements of theatre are in the same plane" (2003: 62) thereby contributing to a unified effect. Schechner identifies these elements as: performer, scenery, costuming, lighting, sound, and props. The performer and the 'scenery' complement one another on equal terms though the director might foreground an aspect at certain

moments during a performance. These performance-text's segments collectively "describe a fictional world and affect thereby a spectator" (Rozik, 1997, p.271) in regard to the issue of healing and reconciliation.

The nature of performance is one of blurry boundaries: from different angles, performance is full of dynamism. To begin with, the boundary between theatre and real life is indistinct and penetrable. Secondly, performance theorists concede that theirs is a multidisciplinary approach. As such, 'theory blending' or 'borrowing' is likely in a performance analysis. Schechner says, "Because cultures interface and energetically hybridize, so is theory" (2002:310). Accordingly, an interpretation of a theatre performance based on performance theory may necessitate a review of theory even if the focus is on a single aspect (Carlson, 1996). When performance is understood as "to do" or "to execute" (Barbara, 1999 cited in Schechner, 2002 p.33), performance theory becomes congruent with certain linguistics principles on the common denominator of performativity. Out of the available linguistic theories, this study incorporates the pragmatic's Speech Act Theory because of its postulation that utterances 'say' and 'do' actions. This study explores linguistic and non-linguistic 'performatives' that impact on healing and reconciliation process.

This study employs performance theory to understand theatre for three reasons which derive from Balm (2008). Firstly, this study loosely equates performance with 'theatrical.' Postlewait and Tracy (2003) say, "Theatricality is an interpretative model for describing psychological identity, social ceremonies, communal festivals and public spectacles" (p.1). This view is further corroborated by Balm (2008) who defines theatricality as "a performativity practice by means of which theatre intersects with wider cultural contents" (p.90). Performance is very

much a theatre register and, in any case, Schechner only finds new meanings to the term ‘performance’ away from the theatre. Secondly, the interdisciplinary nature of Performance Theory affords this research an in-depth view of decoding meaning over and above what say theatre semiotics would offer. Thirdly, in a fast changing technological world; theatre studies may need to embrace other advances and new forms of knowledge (Balm, 2008) which will render it applicable not just to itself but also to other disciplines and areas of human activities.

The choice of Performance Theory for this study is equally informed by criticism leveled on the hitherto predominant theatre concept; theatre semiotics. In rejecting theatre semiotics (either partly or wholly), theatre phenomenologists argue that not everything in a performance can be reduced to ‘signs and signification’. States (1985) views performance as “a holistic entity conceivable not just by semiotic structures” (p.6). There are certain aspects of theatre performance which “elude semiotic classification of signs” (Balm, 2008, p.86). While theatre semiotics describes the semantics of a production, theatre phenomenology focuses on the direct experiential aspects of performance (Balm, 2008). In his criticism, Khaled (2007) questions the gap between theatre semiotic theory and theatre practice. Guided by Balm (2008), this study therefore applies Performance Theory for it bridges the gap between these two perspectives by deriving meaning out of the material staged and the referential.

Performance Theory and the subsequent analysis based on it pose a challenge of terminology between the terms ‘production’ and ‘performance.’ According to Balm (2008), ‘production’ as applied to theatre refers to the artistic, administrative, financial and managerial aspects. On the other hand, performance or sometimes

‘staging’ refers to the aesthetics of the framework. Sothen, as posed by Balm, does a close reader engage in production theory/analysis or Performance theory/analysis? This study does not in any way prescribe a distinction between these English words but takes it from Balm who says, “Performance analysis is generally accepted even if in most cases production analysis” is carried out (2010:132).

These misgivings notwithstanding, the current study is encouraged by new knowledge generated by previous studies which have tried to understand theatrical performances from performance theory perspective. Butler (1990) applies performativity to foreground the female look within a patriarchal mindset. Her conclusion that gender and sexual identity are performativity acts provides meaningful insight to the current study. Further, Boal’s (1979) concept of theatre of the oppressed is but a theory and practice of performance for liberation.

1.10.2 Speech Act Theory

The principle of performance theory that everything in human’s daily life is performed (Schechner, 2002) strikes congruence with speech act theory. Linguistic speech act theory as initially developed by Austin (1962) and modified by Searle (1969) attests to the notion of language as action. Austin distinguishes between utterances which describe a state of affair (constantives) and those in which the “uttering of the sentence is or a part of, the doing of the action” (performatives) (p.5). Austin avows that issuance of an utterance by a speaker does not only say something but also performs an action whose aim is not only to produce a proposition but also aimed at influencing the hearer to take some action. To use Austin’s example, in saying ‘I do’ (in a wedding context); a bride or a groom gets married. Similarly, in declaring, ‘I baptize you’; someone gets baptized. When one tells the other, ‘I

forgive you'; the addressee is forgiven. A speech act therefore ought to be understood as a reproduced material of the existent.

There is a range of approaches to analysis of dramatic texts and performance-texts using the speech act theory. This study operates at the level of Austin's illocutionary force and its 'perlocutionary effect' and only insofar as healing and reconciliation is concerned. Even though Austin limits the 'performative' to utterances characterized by performative verbs delivered in the now tense and by the first person, Searle (1969) reiterates the 'performativity' of all language. To Searle, all sentences perform an utterance act and as expounded by Carlson (1996) "a theory of language is part of a theory of action" (p.63).

In drawing a line between the meaning of words and what words do, Austin (1962) discusses three types of speech acts: 'locutionary', 'illocutionary' and 'perlocutionary.' A locutionary act, in the traditional sense, is the production of a meaningful utterance. It is equivalent to "uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference" (Austin, 1962, p.109). For its part, illocutionary act refers to the conventional force underlying the sentence: it is the performed in the utterance. In Austin's example, 'shoot her' has the locutionary meaning of 'shoot her' and the (illocutionary) force which wants the hearer to comply. Eliam (2003) says, "It is the illocution which constitutes the speech act proper" (p.141). Perlocutionary act centers on the effect of an utterance upon a hearer. These three levels of speech act are not exclusive but do overlap. The sentence 'I order you out of this ship' bears its locutionary meaning of a directive, the illocutionary force of eviction and the perlocutionary action of the fulfilment of the order. Dramatic dialogue is full of

action and counteraction which propel the dramatic conflict within a social context (Eliam, 2003; Pfister, 1991).

An illocutionary speech act is governed by certain ‘felicity conditions’: preparatory, sincerity and essential conditions. These set of conditions are necessary for the successful performance of each illocutionary act (Austin 1962, Searle 1969). Preparatory condition requires a speaker to be in a position of authority to perform the act. Austin draws attention to the appropriateness of the circumstances of an utterance. For example, Austin (1962) says, “Uttering ‘I do’ only makes sense if the speaker is not already married with a wife living, sane, and undivorced” (p.8). As pointed by Banviste (1966) cited in Carlson (1996, p.64), “The performative must be uttered by someone in authority who has the power to effect the act uttered.” Another condition is the sincerity condition which calls for the utterer to mean his/her utterance and “believe it to be true” (Eliam, 2003, p.145). Thirdly, the essential condition demands that the utterer is obliged, say by a promise to undertake the action meant by the utterance. For this study, these conditions are useful in understanding power relations between characters and how these power relations or a shift in them impact on the healing and reconciliation process.

To Austin, since the aim of ‘a performative’ goes beyond making a statement, the fruition of such performatives is dependent on whether they are successfully achieved or not. Further, Austin underscores the usual existence of an “accepted conventional procedure” of doing an utterance in order to bring about “a certain conventional effect” (1962, p.8). Failure to correctly and completely adhere to a procedure may end up in an ‘unhappy’ situation. On the other hand, a successful or ‘happy’ result is achieved if the appropriate speaker utters appropriate words in

appropriate circumstances. Requesting somebody to perform an act is preceded by a granted knowledge that they are able to perform the act; only then will performance be achievable. These conventional procedures need to be 'correctly' and 'completely' executed in order for the performative to be 'happy.' For purposes of healing and reconciliation, the discussion intends to bring out how lasting peace and stability can only materialize within certain accepted linguistic and social conventions.

Austin's contention that utterances sometimes involve emotional courses interests this study. According to Austin (1962), "A person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts and feelings" (1962, p.15). For instance, in speech-acting the procedure of 'apologizing', indications of sincerity becomes necessary. In the absence of these mental and emotional feelings, the procedure stands 'abused.' To test the speakers resolve, if in doubt, Austin suggests the question; "Really?" (p.84). "Illocutionary force indicators such as stress, intonation or facial expressions" (p.73) can shed more light not only on the affective aspects of the utterer but also on ambiguities arising from the multiple interpretations inherent in a single utterance.

Of concern too is the likely distance between the intentions of the speaker and the reaction of the hearer. Eliaamelaborates, "Not all illocutionary acts will have a perlocutionary effect" (2003, p.142). For instance, it is not obvious that the hearer will accept an apology even if it was performed with utmost sincerity (Lowe 1994). The hearer has to recognize the utterer's 'illocutionary intentions' which must have an effect in the hearer. In the absence of this 'securing of uptake' (Austin, 1962, p.117), the illocutionary purpose becomes unsuccessful. Eliam(2003) says, "Comedy

is full of such infelicities caused by the non-securing of uptake” (p.146). In a section of chapter three, there is a discussion on the potential bearing of the ‘uptake’ of humour on healing and reconciliation.

Austin excluded literary language or language spoken by an actor on a theatre stage from his speech act model on the argument that such utterances are ‘hollow’ and ‘void’ because in such circumstances language is “used not seriously but in ways parasitic upon its normal use” (Austin, 1962, p.22). In addition, Porter (1979) cited in Carlson (1996, p.70) argues that “speech act theory is not wholly applicable to drama because there is no single speaker who is the doer of the action.”

Notwithstanding these criticisms, speech act theory is instrumental in evaluating stage dialogue because it is borne out of the speech acts. Pfister (1991) argues, “The performative aspect described by speech act theory is always present in dramatic dialogue” (p.6). Carlson’s view on the “double operations of the speech acts” (1996, p.64) defuse the limitation raised by Austin (1962) that literary language is ‘void’ on everyday speech. As Ohmann cited in Carlson (1996) says, “In a play, the action rides on a train of illocutions” and that “movements of characters...within the social world of the play appear most clearly in their illocutionary acts” (p.71). To circumvent Austin’s stricture against the application of speech acts to fictional works, characters in dramatic dialogue can be considered ‘serious’ if theatre is viewed as the real world (Angela 1994).

Research has shown application of speech act theory to the analysis of dramatic texts and performance texts. Lowe (2002) uses Austin’s and Searle’s speech act theory to explore race relations in a scene in Arthur Miller’s The Crucible where the black slave Tituba confesses to witchcraft and how the same applies to

contemporary American condition (Culpeper, 2002). In his reading of Becket's Waiting for Godot by use of Austin's Speech Act Theory, Begam (2007) vindicates, "Language is a series of metaphors to help us manage and control reality" (p.142). These citations lend credence to the choice of Speech Act Theory for understanding utterances about healing and reconciliation in the fictional works under study.

1.11 Research Methodology

This investigation is qualitative in nature. "Qualitative methods are used to address research questions that require explanation or understanding of social phenomena" (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p.8). Qualitative inquiry befitted the aim of this study: performance analysis with regard to the theme of post-conflict reconciliation. As such; data collection, research methods, data analysis and interpretation, and the final report were methodologically positioned within qualitative research approaches as opposed to quantitative (statistical) research.

1.11.1 Population and Sampling

For the period under study, over fifty plays were performed annually. However, as far as the synopses contained in the official programmes are concerned, not all the plays responded to the then topical issue of post-election violence. Since this study found it improbable to "observe or record everything that occurs" (Ritchie, Lewis & Gillian, 2003, p.78) in the entire population, sampling was necessitated. Using qualitative research design, this inquiry sampled four one-act plays within the KNDF's 2008- 2010 repertoire. The following were the sampled four performance-texts: *Barabbas*(2009) directed by Ondiech Malala and performed by Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, *Forty Minutes* (2008) directed by Nelson Ashitiva and performed by Nairobi School, *Messiah*(2008) directed by Joseph Murungu and

performed by Njiiri School and *The Broken Pot* (2010) by Wenceslaus Masinde and performed by Springboard Academy.

Purposive sampling as a nonprobability technique in qualitative research was employed in arriving at these performance-texts. Mugenda A. and Mugenda O. (2003) regard purposive sampling as a “technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of his or her study” (p.50). In this regard, population sampling is criterion based and is aimed at a small sample. There are different approaches to purposive sampling and each choice yields different results (Ritchie, Lewis & Gillian 2003). Of the different approaches, homogenous purposive sampling suited the aims of this study as it enabled “a detailed picture of a particular phenomenon” (Ritchie, Lewis & Gillian, 2003, p.79). The then anticipated near sameness with regard to the object of the study in the performance-texts allowed for a detailed research on the theme of national healing and reconciliation.

The performance-texts were selected deliberately because they possess “features or characteristics which enabled detailed exploration and understanding” (Ritchie, Lewis & Gillian 2003, p.78) of the central theme of healing and reconciliation. In such a case, proponents of purposive sampling argue that the knowledge of the researcher on the appropriate population becomes vital. The researcher, having watched most of the festival plays for the period under study including all the selected four, has the hindsight which partly guided the homogenous purposive sampling. Equally, sample choice on plays that might have carried significant data was informed by synopses of festival plays as captured in the KNDF official programmes for the period under study. Therefore, a play would be within

sample range if its synopsis indicates that it deals with national healing and reconciliation.

Texts were selected across the three levels of competition: *The Broken Pot* from primary schools category, *Messiah* and *Forty Minutes* from secondary schools level and *Barabbas* from the tertiary institutions. Geographically, the sampled texts were drawn from different regions of Kenya. Further, the choices were based on accessibility of their video recordings from KICD.

1.11.2 Data Collection

In order to achieve its stated objectives, this research gathered relevant data from both primary and secondary sources.

This study uses videorecordings of the four sampled plays as primary sources of data. The Digital Video Disc (DVD) formats of the performance-texts were sourced from KICD; a government corporate body which has recording rights to the festival items. Presumably, the performance-texts of *Barabbas*, *Forty Minutes*, *Messiah* and *The Broken Pot* would allow for an in-depth foray into the issue of post conflict reconciliation. This kind of data is therefore textual in nature. Mathew and Sutton (2004) define textual data as “anything that can be read” (p.117). This definition is broad and extends to images and or other forms of expression from which meanings can be deciphered. In respect to the present study, the purpose therefore is to bring to fore the structures which communicate meaning the details of which are found, broadly, in the staging elements: the performance and the scenography.

In spite of Pavis' assertion that performance analysis can only occur "if the analyst has personally witnessed a live performance, in real time and in a real place, unfiltered" (2003, p.3), this study takes it that video recordings remain the closest in terms of 'reconstruction' of the live performances as they were. Given that these performances were staged in the past, this particular analysis could be classified as 'historical' (Balm 2003). For that matter, video recordings remain the best approximation of the live event, and certainly enable analysis of many aspects of the staging (De Marinis, 1993). According to McAuley (1994), a video recording [and subsequent analysis based on it] ensures that theatrical productions are stored for posterity.

The International Federation of Theatre Research's Performance Analysis Working Group sets three fundamental conditions for each specific analysis: a theoretical focus, a personal experience and the use of video recording (Rozik 1997). The current research meets this threshold as it has the benefit of hindsight. The researcher experienced these performances live and where personal memory could have been vague; the video recordings came in handy. Academically, this research's data is mirrored on the tenets of performance theory and speech act theory.

The collected textual data provided insights in respect to the research question; national healing and reconciliation. As opposed to obtaining data directly from human population by observation or interviews, textual data "offers a mediated access to the lives of those who produced it" (Scott 1990 cited in Mathew & Sutton, 2004, p.117). Scott adds that textual data outlives its producers and is often non-reactive to the fact of being researched. This therefore adds to pliability of textual data for this study. Further, because the plays were recorded and are accessible, data

collection and analysis are feasible. These tools make replication of the current research in future doable.

This research gained insights from textbooks, journals and scholarly papers on roles of literature, cinema and theatre in influencing behavioural change in society. Scholarly works on post conflict healing and reconciliation equally provided insight to this research. Documents from Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), TJRC, NCIC and other such agencies which have researched the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya provided meaningful background to this study. Festival's adjudication reports and rapporteurs' reports were sought from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and reviewed too. Though the analytical value of programmes is contestable (Balm 2003), the official programmes helped with the cast lists, synopses and some useful directorial statements. The few available scholarly studies on KNDF were equally reviewed.

1.11.3 Data Analysis

A close reading of the recorded performances with an eye to key issues and peculiarities which relate to the central research concern of national healing and reconciliation was conducted. This pursuit is corroborated by Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) who say, "Qualitative research is concerned with capturing the richness, and describing the unique complexities of data" (p.76). Presently, a number of approaches are at the disposal of a qualitative research analyst. These include grounded theory, content analysis, theme analysis, discourse analysis, complex theory, dramaturgical analysis, semiotic analysis, performance analysis, network analysis and many others. Authors Denscombe (2007), and Wilkinson and Birmingham, (2003) concur that tools of analysis are best determined not by data

collection method but by the nature of the data produced. Given the textual (word and image) nature of the data source under this study, the data generated is descriptive and as such; tools of measurements which employ statistical methods would not suffice. Instead, “A more holistic approach” (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003 p.76) was deemed fit to help establish issues and strands.

Given that this study is premised on Performance Theory, performance analysis is preferred. Different scholars in the fields of performance studies, drama and theatre suggest the notion of ‘codes’ which in this case add to the system of theatre. De Marinis, (1993), Eliam (2003), Rozik (1997), and Schechner (2002, 2003) concur that theatre operates with codes. These codes or even sub-codes are carefully blended by the source to enable meaningful decoding of information. De Marinis (1993) says, “A performance code is the convention in performance that permits the association of particular contents with particular elements in one or more systems of expression” (p.98). It is these codes which the audience anticipates in a coherent and unified manner. In a very elementary communication channel, from the source; information goes through a medium to a receiver. This study looks at how performance-texts under study convey messages of healing and reconciliation through a theatre performance channel.

Theatre and performance analysts have opined a number of codes which continue to form part of theatre performance tradition. A review of available literature: De Marinis (1993), Eliam (2003), McAuley 1998, Pavis, (1985), Rozik (1997) and Schechner (2003) show different approaches to performance analysis in theatre. These performance analyses models largely draw from theatre semiotics (McAuley 1998). The existing parameters are by no means hard rules to be followed

but conscious propositions which “entail an understanding of its *mise-en-scene*” (Pavis, 2003, p.9). Before arriving at the kind of model that ‘best’ suits the objectives of this study, a review of the existing frameworks follows below.

According to Kowzan (1968) cited in Eliam (2003), a theatre performance system is made up of “language, tone, facial mime, gesture, movement, make up, hairstyle, costume, décor, props, lighting, music and sound”(p.44). In 1985, Pavis developed a performance analysis questionnaire which broadly asks questions in the areas of general characteristics of *mis-en-scene*, scenography, lighting, objects, costumes, actors’ performances, music and spectacle. Pavis’ questionnaire is helpful to this study because its design is meant for students and as such guides a structured analysis. McAuley (1998) schema for performance analysis identifies four stages in the analytical process: material signifiers, narrative content, the paradigmatic axis and global statement. McAuley’s schema is useful to this study on two fronts: one, in terms of sequencing of the analysis and, secondly, in its being context conscious. Schechner (1968, 2002, & 2003) identifies two main elements: the performer and the environment. He breaks down the environment into: scenery, costuming, lighting, sound, and props. On its part, KNDF has marking schemes which guide adjudication of performances. The play genre is examined in terms of choice of story, script, acting, production, costume and décor, and general achievement (KNDF Rules and Regulations 2006, 2013).

Taking all these performance analyses paradigms into account, this research adopts a model that focuses on three broad parameters: the narrative that unfolds on stage, the actor’s/actress’s performance and the staging/production techniques. The plots of the performance-texts are analyzed in terms of how the narrative of the story

unfolds and how the story segments bear on the theme of healing and reconciliation. Analysis of the performer is by way of verbal language, blocking, stage movements, gestures and other corporeal exploits. Under production techniques, or technical elements according to Schechner (1968), are considered four strands: backdrop and décor, props, lighting and sonic elements. These strands provide a systematic way which guides the analysis of the running issue; the treatment of the theme of national healing and reconciliation in the performances.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has stated that in response to discourses about Kenya's 2007/2008 PEV, this qualitative research studies KNDF performance-texts of *Barabbas* (2009), *Forty Minutes* (2008), *Messiah* (2008) and *The Broken Pot* (2010). This study is in respect to the treatment of the theme of national healing and reconciliation. This chapter has discussed the theoretical framework upon which the study is based. Whereas speech act theory guided the analysis of dramatic dialogue, Performance Theory provided the parameters for understanding these performance-texts. The next chapter discusses the narrative contents of the performance-texts.

CHAPTER TWO: THE IMPLICATION OF THE NARRATIVE CONTENTS ON HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter delves into the narrative contents and by implication the plots of the performance-texts and how these narratives bear on healing and reconciliation. In a play performance, the spectators experience its story line, its twists and turns, its details of actions and ordering of events. These various elements in the unfolding of drama contribute to a unified piece which can be considered as the plot. The events in a dramatic plot are, according to Di Yanni (2007), “Carefully arranged series of causally related incidents” (p.1268). The concept of the plot explained by Di Yanni which this research adopts for derives from Aristotle’s understanding. In such a structuring, actions build to a crisis before falling down to a denouement. In effect, a good plot shows cause and effect relationship in a time chain sequence. As such, the discussion in this chapter interprets what these performance-texts consider, in their narratives, as possible causes of conflicts in society and how best to handle them so as to enhance healing and reconciliation.

2.2 Narratives of the Conflicts

This research is interested in how the narrative contents of the performances under study enhance or preclude healing and reconciliation. The organization of plot in theatre just like in other narrative modes such as film and novels can be modeled into three broad parts: beginning, middle and end. Usually, the beginning of a play is its exposition. This is the positioning of the foundation of a problem or conflict upon which the plot will be developed. The audience is introduced to the characters and their setting both in terms of place and time. Actions and counter actions then build

to a crisis the highest point of which is a climax; the moment of topmost strain. From this peak, tension is eased and action falls towards a resolution. In the resolution of a play, “dramatic questions or the problems posed at the exposition stage are more or less resolved” (Anderson, 1993, p.337). This understanding of plot is further corroborated by Fran (1995) who postulates, “A dramatic plot involves a conflict or struggle that is resolved in action which ultimately leads to a climax and to a logical conclusion” (p.152).

A similar plot is discernible in real time post conflict management. According to the conflict escalation theory, conflict begins when parties have differing takes of the issue at stake (Bagshaw et.al, 2005). Each side tries to convince the antagonizing side to change their views. Should this fail, relations get more polarized by negative language and derogatory images expressed against the ‘enemy.’ If not managed at this level, conflict hits the high point of physical violence preceded by verbal violence. Simply put, a problem arises, for example, when communities feud over an economic resource. Each side’s claim of the resource is impeded by the others’ want of the same. With this complication, to use the cliché, ‘the plot thickens.’ If mismanaged, this dispute might escalate into a violent crisis. Through various methods, efforts can then be made by various players to work out a solution. The concept of conflict escalation as understood in the field of conflict management is of relevance to this study as it shares the notion of progression of conflict with the dramatic plot. A dramatic plot, “gives an incremental storyline; a plot that builds on the previous action of the story and then again” (Mackey & Cooper, 2000, p.93). How the performance-texts under study construct their plots through intensification of the

conflict not only shows the various phases of conflict but also calls upon unique resolution strategies for each level.

Though variances can be cited between theatre and conflict management domains, both operate generally on a similar conceptual framework: either way, there is a strained situation that develops into a climactic crux. According to conflict management practitioner Parry (1991), there cannot be “conflict resolution without conflict” (p.55). Conflict is central to both theatre and conflict management purviews. From conflict, a more stable situation is worked out. Kenya’s 2007/2008 PEV created rifts which prompted calls for stability. To achieve this stability, players engaged in the conflict as antagonists or as third party in one way or the other make attempts aimed at de-escalating tension and bridging of the gap(s).

Before reconciliation can be achieved, the complete story of what happened in 2007/2008 has to be told with utmost candour and without “perceptible partisan slants and omissions” (Caplan, 2010, p.251). Though fully aware that the sampled performances are imaginary works, this research takes note that the directors of these performances were alive to the (now historical) turmoil that pervaded Kenya when they were staging these plays. In their own right, therefore, these performances and the construction of their narratives around Kenya’s 2007/2008 PEV provide critical spaces for engaging national cohesion. Giving audience to these stories of conflict is not done for the mere sake of it but for the important reason that in understanding the points of departures among groups, social ethos can be developed. The retelling of these narratives, Muhama (2012) says, “Gives room for the past to be uncovered so that the memories of bitterness can be addressed” (p.170).

In turning to the performances of *Barabbas* by Ondiech Malala, *Forty Minutes* by Nelson Ashitiva, *Messiah* by Joseph Murungu and *The Broken Pot* by Wenceslaus Masinde, this study purposes to fathom how conflicts in these performance-texts are constructed and how healing and reconciliation are worked out based on the conflicts.

2.2.1 *Messiah*

Messiah was performed by Njiiri School at the 2008 national festival held at Menengai Secondary School Hall, Nakuru town. The performance was directed by Joseph Murungu. Charles Gitonga starred as Maliako, Renson Muhia as Captain Zakayo and Victor Mwoki as Mwanga.

Captain Zakayo, a short and blind man, has requested his subjects to guide him to the island of Bamilia. The purpose of his voyage to the archipelago is to return to the people of Bamilia what he had taken away from them: his wife. This move, bizarre as it is, is in pursuance to a peace agreement that had been signed between the generals of the two warring communities: the Bamilia and the Bachui. Captain Zakayo is not at peace with himself, with his wife Maliako and with the enemy tribe (Bamilia). The twenty years old marriage between Captain Zakayo and Maliako has so far remained barren. In returning Maliako to the people of Bamilia, he not only gives back a woman he had taken from one of the Bamilias but also hopes to negotiate for peace. In his reverie, he is sure to get his sight back too. Just then, a medicine man arrives from the island of Bamilia to cure Captain Zakayo's blindness. The medicine man had had to contend with physical attacks on his body by his very own Bamilia people who consider his offer of providing medical treatment for Captain Zakayo's blindness and hallucinations traitorous. To the

Bamilia people, Captain Zakayo and his Bachui folks are sworn enemies with whom they must not interact.

To captain Zakayo, the medicine man is his messiah who comes at the hour of need. He hopes the messiah will perform miracles and return his sight. However, the medicine man insists that Captain Zakayo must first fulfill a promise he had made to his wife, Maliako, on the day they got married. Captain Zakayo is reluctant because the signed vow was that upon his (Captain Zakayo's) exit from power, Maliako's son (Isaiah) would assume the ascendancy of the territory. Captain Zakayo now sees this as giving the captaincy of the ship to an enemy tribe. Maliako begot his son Isaiah from an earlier marriage with Mnyonge. Captain Zakayo had used his power and influence to forcefully rob Mnyonge of Maliako. Mnyonge is a Bamilia while Maliako, just like Captain Zakayo, is a Bachui.

On the evidence of self-realization and the written will, Captain Zakayo's options are limited. He returns all that he had stolen and hands over the captaincy of the ship to Isaiah whose father, Mnyonge, he (Captain Zakayo) had killed twenty years before. It turns out that Isaiah was disguised as the medicine man. The now former Captain Zakayo calls for peace and co-operation between the tribes and no one is best suited to champion this call than Isaiah for he has the blood of either tribe.

2.2.2 *Forty Minutes*

The play *Forty Minutes* was performed by Nairobi school; a secondary school located to the west of Kenya's capital city. The performance featured among others: Gift Nthusi as Daudi, Denis Mwangi as Janet, Boniface Kamau as Kwame and Mwaki Dedela as Doctor. The performance was directed by Nelson Ashitiva and

lasted, as its title suggests, forty minutes on stage. It featured in the 2008 national festival at Menengai High School Hall, Nakuru.

Daudi lies in a hospital bed and is in need of blood transfusion to save his life. Currently, the hospital does not have in its blood bank the blood type that he requires. His blood group type is rare and the only person around known to have the same is Kwame. However, Kwame refuses to donate blood because during the recent violent conflicts Daudi had turned against him. This is in spite of their having been friends. Through flashback the spectators watch how the attackers pursuing Kwame caught up with him in Daudi's house. Daudi did not only blatantly disown Kwame but was also ready to kill him. Daudi's raised machete could have fatally landed on Kwame's head had it not been for the timely intervention of the police to save Kwame, his son and his pregnant wife.

Now that the same Daudi is in hospital and none amongst his kinsmen whom he had fought alongside can save him, his wife (Janet) turns to Kwame. Kwame does not feel obliged to help. However, with a lot of persuasion from Janet and the doctor, reason prevails and he offers his blood 'for whatever it is worth' to save Daudi.

2.2.3 *Barabbas*

The performance was by Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, a tertiary institution based in Nairobi city. The performance was at the 2009 national festival held in Meru School and was directed by the late Ondiech Malala. The play begins with a public trial in which the masses shout that the judge release Barabbas and not Philemon. Like the biblical Pilate, the judge washes his hands but just then Rebecca appeals on behalf of Philemon, her betrothed, who has remained silent for the period of one year that the trial has lasted. The story digs deeper into what the masses don't

want to handle; the truth. Barabbas who is a politician is charged for inciting ‘his people’ to violence against the authorities. Police officer Sergeant Philemon as an agent of state, on his part, is in the dock for having opened fire at the rioting mob while on duty. After listening to Philemon’s confession, the judge and the masses regain their collective consciousness. Finally, Philemon is set free while Barabbas is sent to the gallows.

2.2.4 *The Broken Pot*

The Broken Pot was performed in the 2010 festival held in Kisumu City by pupils of Spring Board Academy; a primary school in the current Busia County and was directed by Wenceslaus Masinde. Anita Bright Wandera starred as Cheron, Gillan Muchama as principal, John Wabidonge as Cheron’s father, Lauraine Masiga as teacher, and Constance Liavoga as Nakweya. *The Broken Pot* unfolded on stage for thirty one minutes.

In the performance-text, a fight erupts between Nakweya and Cheron on the very day the former reports to her new school. Through memory, events unfold of why the once bosom friends are presently on a collision. Their antagonism is not a long standing feud but a very recent phenomenon. It can be traced back to when violence erupted between the two ethnic communities that the two girls descended from. The then violent conflict had divided Cheron and Nakweya not just along family lines but also along ethnic orientations. While Cheron lost her mother in the skirmishes, Nakweya had to contend with a severely burnt mother and a dead father. Like the proverbial phoenix bird, the survivors of the two families separately arose from the ashes. Cheron and her father had to start afresh. Similarly, Nakweya and her scar faced mother had to build anew. It is part of this reconstruction which takes

Nakweya to a new school built to help tortured children deal with the trauma of violence.

At the new school, she meets Cheronno for the first time since the eruption of the chaos. The bitterness she harbours cannot allow her to share a school with a girl whose father had killed hers. On her part, Cheronno hates Nakweya and her people for having killed her mother. She can't put up with Nakweya in the same school either. However, classmates and teachers are able to reconcile the two girls. They join hands in castigating the dark past while putting measures to ensure a harmonious society henceforth.

2.3 Revisiting the Wounds through Dramatic Flashback

The uses of flashback and fore flash have been witnessed in theatre as much as they are features of film and other literary art forms. Indeed, a director may design incidents in a way that would provide pleasure through surprise; a nonlinear storyline heightens the story. It is striking that the scenes of violent conflicts in the performance-texts under study are availed on flashback mode. It is essential to note that these characters' memories are what in their view truthfully happened in the past. However, what is presented on a theatre stage as performance is truthful only in the fictional world but a near truth in history. The characters' memories allow them to confront issues that gave birth to conflict in the past so as to come to terms with the demands of the present which require their response to healing and reconciliation propositions. The discussion that ensues opens wounds of conflicts as revealed, in part, through flashback so as to "provide the facility through which reconciliation may succeed" (Rob & Dennis, 2011, p.59).

Through dramatic flashbacks, *Barabbas*, *Forty Minutes*, *Messiah* and *The Broken Pot* all point accusing fingers at the political class for inciting violence. In Joseph Murungu's *Messiah*, the narrative's structure contains two segments of flashbacks. In the first instance, the director puts back to life the events of twenty years ago when Captain Zakayo got married to Maliako. In a narration that goes hand in hand with a mime that recounts the events, the audience discovers that Captain Zakayo had incited Maliako's Bachui family against her husband Mnyonge who is a Bamilia. Captain Zakayo's contention is that Maliako is married to a man from an 'enemy' tribe. The Bachuis then attacked Mnyonge and slit his tongue leaving him dumb and paralysed. Maliako then sought help from Captain Zakayo in order to accord Mnyonge medical treatment. However, Captain Zakayo took advantage of this situation and made Maliako offers she could not resist. He ordered for the taking away of the 'Bamilia piece of garbage' before marrying Maliako. This action deepened the conflict between the two communities.

Evident from *Messiah* is that the incitements to violence take ethnic lines. The flashback on the events leading to and the eventual marriage of convenience between Captain Zakayo and Maliako is important to the healing and reconciliation that the former now seeks. The flashback reveals negative ethnicity as a cause to the violence that has always existed between the two antagonizing ethnic groups. Nothing best captures this than Captain Zakayo's own words to Maliako. He says, "Your husband is a Bamilia and you are a Bachui. Can darkness and day mix?" A probable directorial message is that Captain Zakayo's shortness in height and diminutive figure prevent him from seeing the viability of intermarriage as a means of facilitating coexistences across cultures. Little Isaiah is taken away by his uncle,

Wanga, who is categorical that Captain Zakayo has destroyed the delicate peace that existed between the Bamilia and the Bachui. Poignantly, his reason for taking away the boy is because Isaiah is his brother's (Mnyonge) son and not Captain Zakayo's. Of this Maliako retorts, "But my son has the blood of the two tribes." Isaiah is in essence what should hold the two tribes together as espoused by Maliako. The director seems to suggest, through flashback, that healing and reconciliation can be enriched more by dealing with domestic, political and ethnic forms of verbal and physical abuses.

In *The Broken Pot* by Wenceslaus Masinde, incitement as one of the triggers of violent conflict is unraveled through flashback. Hell breaks loose as Nakweya and Cherono are playing when a loud deafening bang goes. Westerly, the two girls see smoke and fire; there are sounds and sights of wailing women and crying children. In the midst of this, Cherono and Nakweya decide to run to their respective homes for safety. As Nakweya runs home, her father who has been beckoning from the balcony is felled down with a bullet fired by Cherono's father. This seems an act of revenge because the narrative given to Nakweya by her father is that as they were driving home, they were stopped by Cherono's 'people' after which the assailants pulled Cherono's mother out of the car before killing her. This flashback eases the audience to the current standoff between the girls when their lives cross paths again in a school after the violence. Cherono's hard feelings against Nakweya stem from an incitement from the former's father. Part of the healing and reconciliation task ought to be that of dispersing these negative sentiments until positive communication and relationships are instituted (again).

The politician character Barabbas in the play *Barabbas* takes advantage of the masses and the unemployed to trigger them to violent conflicts. According to NCIC (2012a), the youth were key perpetrators of the post-election violence that befell Kenya in 2007/2008. The demonstration that Jiwe coordinates on behalf of his master, Barabbas, is to compel the president to appoint Barabbas to a ministerial portfolio. The demonstrators are backing Barabbas because he is ‘their son’ thus one of their own. In his treatment of negative ethnicity as a cause of hostilities, it is possible Ondiech Malala was drawing from the Kenyan society. In reference to Kenya’s 2007/2008 PEV, Caplan (2010) says, “Dispossessed people willingly came out to commit atrocities in the name of their higher placed kinsfolk” (p.250). ‘Our son’ mentality is a sectional approach to national issues which add to tribalism and nepotism. Negative ethnicity and nepotism, as revealed through this flashback, are thumbs down perceptions which nix national healing and reconciliation tries.

Forty Minutes is a crisis that lasts forty minutes in a hospital scene but whose clear insight is provided through dramatic flashback. Daudi’s brother, Professor, is the area member of parliament who incites the populace to violence. In fleeing from the marauding men, Kwame seeks safety in Daudi’s house yet Daudi refuses to open the door for Kwame. He argues that in letting Kwame in, he would be risking his life and that of his family too; he would rather the attackers catch up with Kwame and kill him. This is hard for Kwame to swallow considering that they had been friends. Daudi’s wife, Janet, goes against her husband’s directives and opens the door for the Kwame’s. Just immediately, Professor and his henchmen arrive at Daudi’s house in hot pursuit of Kwame, roughs Daudi up before forcing him to denounce his friend Kwame. Professor challenges Daudi to prove his loyalty to the tribe by giving him a

machete to kill Kwame. Compelled by the likely consequences of going against the grain, Daudi raises the weapon to slash Kwame. Just then, the police arrive at the scene to save Kwame's head. Kwame and his family are given a safe corridor to an internally displaced person's (IDP) camp. These nasty gashes left by (violent) conflicts need to be nursed until they are properly cured.

Sadly, the politicians incite the masses to violence for their own selfish interests. While addressing his people, Professor prods them to stake their claim for the national cake. Unsurprisingly, he calls for calmness as soon as he is appointed the minister for Poisonous Emissions, Sewers and Sewerage Services. Hit by guilt and upon realizing that the Member of Parliament was fighting for his own selfish gain, Daudi confronts his brother wielding the very machete he had raised against Kwame. For threatening the life of a very important person, Daudi is shot at by the bodyguards. With a bullet lodged in his left shoulder, Daudi is left lying on the ground for the dead. It takes Janet and Kwame to rush him to hospital, the scene of the present setting. Daudi's memories of these past events make him remorseful for his violent actions in the past. This feeling of remorse is a turning point for healing and reconciliation.

It is necessary that the theatre space digs deep to find out these root causes of conflicts so as to position healing and reconciliation processes within context. In *Barabbas*, just like in *Forty Minutes*, the audience again watches the politicians influence the public to violent conflict for personal interests. Using the analogy of the bird which gave the tortoise feathers to attend a party in the main house but is now locked out by the very tortoise, Barabbas stirs his folks to face the perceived enemy. He says, "Let us show the tortoise that our mothers bore sons." Just like

Professor in *Forty Minutes*, Barabbas' only time of visiting his constituents is when elections are around the corner and this time round his sight is set on a ministerial appointment and not the plight of the masses he feigns he is interested in. The excerpt below between the politician and his voter captures the contradictions of their purposes.

Barabbas	I must get the post
Jiwe	The president must get you, our son, an office. Otherwise we shall not get off the streets

By use of the character Barabbas, Ondiech Malala alerts the audience about politicians in real life who thrive upon disharmony in society. Political leaders like Barabbas, Captain Zakayo, and Professor win over the gullible masses to fight and in effect breach peace which out of necessity ought to be rebuilt through healing and reconciliation. These theatrical productions poke the audience that the great influence that the political class has over the masses to stir them into violent mannerisms ought to be turned into positive social behaviours so that the aggressors may “act supportively towards those they have victimized” (Bagshaw et.al, 2005, p.72). In this way, the theatre space provides a social learning ground for curing wounds of conflicts.

A sore point in the performances of these memories is the credulous nature of the masses which makes them to be agents of violent conflicts. Unemployment makes Jiwe and his comrades, in *Barabbas*, gullible and prone to manipulation by the affluent political class. Barabbas gives Jiwe cash handouts which hardly sustains a meal. Barabbas does this to ensure Jiwe's complete slavery to him. In *Forty*

Minutes, Daudi is at the beck and call of professor (his brother) due to blind loyalty to family and tribe. With him in this conundrum are Professor's henchmen who wouldn't hesitate to kill in the name of their member of parliament: they dare not do otherwise. Captain Zakayo in *Messiah* rouses his Bachui tribesmen against Mnyonge who is a Bamilia. The masses are at the mercy of their leader whom they blindly serve. The flashbacks reveal that the common man easily gets incited into violent conflicts out of economic depravity and sheer naivety. The directors of these productions seem to suggest that the material needs of the parties in a conflict need to be addressed as part of healing and reconciliation agenda.

The present call for healing and reconciliation is a possible mission especially because the aggressors and their victims used to live amicably before the disputes. In *The Broken Pot* Nakweya sits in a classroom corner casting a lonely figure and is soon lost in a daydream. She reminisces how she used to play with Cherono, how they liked their environment and how they simply called it paradise. However, their fathers would soon come to stop them from playing. Then, the two adults each with his daughter in tow go separate directions, violence erupts and Nakweya's father is killed. Lost in this miasma and with nowhere to turn to, Nakweya runs to her friend Cherono's home. Sadly though, Cherono slams the door on Nakweya. Cherono feels nothing but deep hatred for Nakweya because the latter's people had already killed her mother. This is surprising considering that they have been friends and that about thirty minutes before the chaos, the two girls had been playmates. Nakweya's pleas go unheard as revealed in the dialogue below.

NAKWEYA	Cherono, Cherono, save me. It is your friend Nakweya.
CHERONO	I have no friend called Nakweya
NAKWEYA	Please, Cherono, open the door. They will kill me outside here
CHERONO	I don't care. Go and get killed.

In the line of duty, Sergeant Philemon in *Barabbas*, aims at the demonstrators and kills his own brother, Jiwe, a boy whose education he sponsored up to university level and who he currently houses. He is presently haunted by this tragic blotch in his personal history. His consciousness is disturbed by the memory of dead bodies strewn along the streets and smoke produced by houses being burnt. The air he breathes chokes him for it smells of roasted human bodies. This is a thinly veiled reference to some of the atrocities committed in Kenya following the violence of 2007/2008. In Kiaamba village near Eldoret town, “women and children were burned alive in a church and murdered in their homes” (Klopp & Kamungi, 2008, p.12). The national festival in which the plays under study were performed was held in April 2008. These performances were evidently alive to the events unfolding in Kenya during the early period of 2008. In *Forty Minutes*, Daudi and Kwame were, before the violence, the best of friends. Kwame was the only ‘brother’ Daudi had known and vice versa. They were always there for each other and they shared virtually everything. This glorious moment was disrupted by a moment of violence in which Daudi, compelled by tribal forces, turned against Kwame. There is need to replace these violent dialogues with peaceful discourses. A return to the earlier state of normality is fundamental to healing and reconciliation.

To add to the list of wounds of conflicts opened through memory in the fictional worlds of these performance-texts is about the unbearable living conditions in which the displaced persons find themselves in. In *Forty Minutes*, in another instance of flashback played out in Kwame's disturbed mind, the spectators watch how life in the IDP's camp was awful as the evictees would go without food in chilly and rain soaked nights. Not satisfied by the displacement of their countrymen, Daudi and his people attack the internal refugees in a night raid setting ablaze their only shelter and killing Kwame's son in the inferno. In *The Broken Pot*, Nakweya joins a long trek of internally displaced persons who end up in a camp. Life in the camp becomes intolerable since they go without food for days; suffer cold and chilly nights with the only blanket over them being the sky. According to Gona (2010), "human rights based approach to peace building processes" (p.207) would be mindful of the plight of the IDP's by integrating approaches that 'cools' the effect of the conflict. Resettling of the displaced persons is in harmony with the calls for peace building through creation of societies which "affirm human dignity through meeting human needs and protecting human rights" (Lisa, 2005, p.31). There is urge for the "reintegration of the displaced through strategic redress, reconciliation and reconstruction initiatives" (Klopp & Nuur, 2012, p.3). Meeting material needs of such victims of violent conflicts, finding shelter and other related basic needs might not fully compensate the victims but are sensible strategies for building peace in a post-conflict society.

The enactments of the past scenes of conflicts through flashback can prove to be very emotive and can have a weepy effect on the spectators. Participants in a drama performance, Bolton (1979) argues, ought to be "touched emotionally enough

to bring about a change of attitude [and] a change in the value” (p.32). In *The Broken Pot*, Nakweya (Constance Liavoga) and Cherono (Anita Bright Wandera) separately bring out the message of deeply hurt people through their emotive acting. It is actually by such moving performances that it makes sense for the audience to take seriously the value of reconciliation. In *Messiah*, through flashback, is a re-enactment of Mnyonge’s burial. The recounting of that burial proves too painful for Maliako (Charles Gitonga) to bear; it moves her to shed tears. It is possible some of the spectators experienced the same during the live performance. By opting for such touching representation, Joseph Murungu purposes to influence the spectators emotionally about conflict conditions thereby empowering them with necessary tools for handling corresponding conflicts in their daily performances in real life.

Performing memory in *Forty Minutes* carries with it a touching effect as well. Janet’s (Denis Mwangi) clear memory coupled with her candid but emotional rendition bring the picture as it were. Throughout the forty minutes of the play, the character is ever in tears in her efforts to convince Kwame (Boniface Kamau) to accept to donate blood which would save Daudi (Gift Nthusi). Her believable acting lends credence to her purpose in the play. The gory portrayal of the burning IDP camp in *Forty Minutes* evokes emotions of empathy in the audience just as the murderer’s scene in *Barabbas* in which the police open fire on the rioters does. Yet, “it is vital that these stories of pain, loss, suspicion, hatred, and anger find their place in the congregation of remembrance” (Muhama, 2012, p.171). As the aggressor and his victim come face to face in order to forgive and reconcile, the audience are invited to comprehend the conflict that had earlier made the views of the antagonists incompatible.

Human lives lost as a result of failure to positively manage conflict at the lower phases act as points of references whenever forgiveness is sought as a means of healing and reconciliation. In the view of South African theatre scholar and practitioner Mda, “True reconciliation will only happen when we are able to confront what happened yesterday” (2002, p.280). Mda dissuades theatre players in peace building from being silent about horrors of the conflict. Theatre has a duty to tell these truths on behalf of the dead and survivors as a way of warning the present and the future generations not to give room for recurrences of such carnages. In *Messiah*, Mnyonge’s death twenty years ago reverberates through the present debate of whether to forgive Captain Zakayo or not. Part of the deal includes making Captain Zakayo to atone for the loss of Mnyonge by returning his (Mnyonge’s) wife and handing over power to Mnyonge’s son; Isaiah.

Healing and reconciliation in *The Broken Pot* is privileged because the mediators (teachers and school pupils) are able to persuade the antagonizing Nakweya and Cheronno that neither of them was to blame for the deaths which had created the deep divide between them. In *Barabbas*, the death of Jiwe and those of his comrades act as the turning point in the performance. Their deaths are the reason the community decides to seek justice in a public court on behalf of the individuals and the collective. In *Forty Minutes*, the price is paid by Kwame’s son and the others killed in the night inferno. Before Kwame can forgive Daudi, he groans at the memory of his dead son: suffering once more the agonizing torments of that ghastly night. The pain of losing even a turncoat like Daudi, Ashitiva suggests, is very excruciating to the extent that it compels Kwame to donate blood so as to save

Daudi. This mutual understanding which was lacking at the time of conflict is now desirable for forgiveness, healing and reconciliation.

Through flashback, the use of armed (military) intervention as a strategy for defusing tension between sides in a conflict is opened for discussion in *The Broken Pot*. By shooting indiscriminately at the protesting mob, the reaction of the police exacerbates an already volatile situation. Wenceslaus Masinde portrays the police as a trigger happy lot ready to maim, at the least provocation, even unarmed demonstrators. The police unit is cast as a force devoid of logical reasoning and one that simply relies on its brute force. The police officers in *Barabbas* contend that they would kill a stone carrying demonstrator for the simple reason that David killed Goliath with a stone. Wenceslaus Masinde and Ondiech Malala in their respective productions were possibly drawing from the Kenya they were living in at the time of these performances. Available literature shows that the Kenyan police used excess force in trying to deal with violent conflicts which erupted after the disputed December 2007 polls. Ndungu (2008) documents that at the height of Kenya's 2007/2008 violence, "there were many cases of cruel and excessive force meted out upon innocent and harmless demonstrators by rogue officers" (p.116). To the contrary, Ashitva paints police officers in *Forty Minutes* as responsible cops who rescue Kwame from the professor's bloodhounds. Their arrival at the nick of time gives Kwame a chance to live to tell his story. As much as armed intervention has been used in trying to stop violent conflicts in these performance-texts, the ensuing conciliatory mechanisms necessitate invocation of non-violent gamut.

A comprehension of the nature of the conflict in terms of: causes, players and circumstances as a diagnostic program inject its findings to the treatment of the identified problems. From the vantage point of Schechner's performance theory principle of 'as performance' - where he regards human action in everyday life to be performance - as an analytical tool, "one can look into things otherwise closed off to inquiry" (Schechner, 2002, p.42). Understanding of divergence of opinions in a conflict situation, to apply Schechner's maxim, is "a general trend toward the dissolution of boundaries of all kinds" (p.42). Analyzing of conflicts through a catechism of performance segments such as space, time, roles and the performed would give directions as to what medicines can be administered so as to heal and reconcile the nation.

2.4 Resolving the Dramatic Conflict: A Way Forward for Reconciliation

By practice, dramatic conflicts are often resolved so as to return to some sort of equilibrium from a status of disequilibrium. Finding of new stability is a central concern in the structuring of a dramatic plot as much as it is a concern for conflict management in real time. If the fictional performance-texts under study are to be considered as opportunities for shared learning, then a number of readings are discernible from the resolutions of their fictional conflicts. Through various theatrical languages, the performance-texts put forward a number of propositions for considerations in managing conflict among individuals and at other levels in society. The issues of history, truth, and memory are already discussed as issues around which the narratives of the performance-texts are woven so as to have a bearing on healing and reconciliation. Evident too are notions of forgiveness, reparation, and transitional justice all of which this discussion now turns to.

2.4.1 Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Given its use in religious contexts, forgiveness refers to pardoning of a wrong. Roberts (1995) cited in Doorne (2008, p.383) views forgiveness as “overcoming of feelings of revenge, moral hatred, indignation or some other feelings that are related to anger.” Forgiveness offered by a victim to a wrongdoer expresses a gesture of benevolence for wrongdoers. Menn (2008) likens forgiveness to grace and further comments that forgiveness is much an emotional experience as it is a cognitive process. Reconciliation can be defined as the “coming together of two [or more] people” (Doorn, 2008, p.389) so as to (re)build relationships. Forgiveness and reconciliation, scholars have argued, can exist without the other. It is the assertion of Enright (2001) that in a post-conflict situation “one may forgive and not reconcile but one never truly reconciles without some form of forgiving taking place” (p.31). The bottom line between forgiveness and reconciliation refers to the mutual acceptance to let go of any hard feelings and starting to reframe wrongdoers positively.

The issue of forgiveness in *Messiah* is rather confounding because the tone of its performance is one that smacks of revenge. Even though Captain Zakayo’s asking for forgiveness is an acknowledgement of guilt, his being forgiven is “subject to [certain] conditions” (Doorn, 2008, p.385). These conditions can be likened to felicity conditions described by speech act theorist Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). Though Captain Zakayo marvels at his new found self-awareness, the forgiveness that he seeks from the ‘enemy’ comes with compensation; he hands back Maliako to the Bamilia and surrenders his captaincy to Isaiah. Thus, the audience watches a conditional forgiveness and whether this translates to reconciliation remains debatable. Have Maliako, Isaiah, Mwanga and their Bamilia kinsmen forgiven

Captain Zakayo? Or have they just taken their sweet revenge? Another question that begs answers is whether Captain Zakayo's admission of guilt is also shared by his fellow Bachui. Being the leader who orchestrated violence, the audience can only assume that he bears greater responsibility. Presumably, his acknowledgement of culpability is on his behalf and that of his agents. Collective crime, Murungu implies, must be followed by collective responsibility for the consequences and collective reconciliation.

Sergeant Philemon in *Barabbas* is forgiven by the community for confessing his wrongs. The communal court has the power to forgive wrongdoers in its midst and members rightly perform so for Barabbas. Rigby (2001) cited in Bloomfield (2006, p.4) says, "Forgiveness is something offenders should earn, not something that victims should give away." The circumstances of Sergeant Philemon's performed confession convince the confessor to forgive. On this scale, nothing is more rewarding to the victim group than the acknowledgment of their tormentors that they (the tormentors) were wrong. Forgiveness provides a realistic opportunity for renewal of ties thus aiding healing of the wounds of conflict.

In *Forty Minutes*, Kwame empathizes with the sick Daudi and agrees to donate blood to save his former friend. Kwame's forgiving nature is seen in his choosing not to "act from hostilities rooted in the transgressions of the wrongdoer" (Pettigrove, 2006 cited in Doorn, 2008, p.384). The performance of this forgiveness was convincing given the emotional involvement of the character playing the role. In doing so, Kwame probably understands that Daudi was forced to be hostile towards him (Kwame) by forces beyond his (Daudi's) control. In *The Broken Pot*, Nakweya and Cheronno are persuaded to a point of realizing that neither of them is at fault for

their present predicament. Between themselves, they have rebuilt some meaningful degree of trust which Wenceslaus Masinde suggests is a requirement for reconciliation. They agree to drop any hard feelings harboured against one another and in a spirited gesture, they hold hands as a sign of renewed friendship. “Forgiveness borne out of understanding quite possibly holds a promise for reconciliation” (Martin, 2012, p.18). Even though forgiveness between the aggressors and the victims in these performances are between individuals, their public staging appeals to the whole nation.

2.4.2 Reparation and reconciliation

In the context of this discussion, reparation is considered as a payment that an aggressor in a conflict situation gives to a wronged party so as to show remorse. Either through symbolic rituals (like naming of a street in honour of the dead) or through material gifts, acts of reparations play crucial roles in addressing past injustices. However, Hamber and Richard (2002) argue that no amount of monetary or other forms of reparations “can ameliorate all the levels of psychological pain suffered by a survivor” (p.6). Even though any form of reparation remains a substantial input towards peace building, compensation hardly satisfies survivors or victims. Hamber and Richard further argue that “reparation and the truth about what happened must be linked” (p.15). Otherwise, the victims/survivors might view it as a gimmick for buying their silences and for stifling their narratives about the conflicts or even their quest for justice. It is not just the giving out of materials that advantages the healing and reconciliation process but also what Hamber and Richard call the “social context” (p.13) in which these acts are performed. The public giving and receiving of reparations therefore have to be, in a way, speech acted and also come

with socially approved obligations which in this case are commitments to “preventing the past as seeds of renewed conflicts” (Doorn, 2008, p.394).

Joseph Murungubroaches the issue of reparation as a precursor to healing and reconciliation in *Messiah*. Captain Zakayo expiates his past misdeeds by giving back to the Bamilia what he had stolen from them. Isaiah, as per the dictates of the will, accepts the symbol of authority passed on to him by Captain Zakayo in full view of both the Bachui and the Bamilia. The witnesses present, the situation of the exchange and the spirit of the situation demand that the new captain, himself a past victim, “must not assume the role of a new oppressor” (Mda, 2002, p.280). As already pointed out, no amount of reparation can fully compensate for the damages and losses incurred during the violent conflicts. The death of Mnyonge in *Messiah*, the death of Jiwe in *Barabbas*, the death of Kwame’s son and others in *Forty Minutes* and the death of Nakweya’s father and Cheronno’s mother in *The Broken Pot* are all irreplaceable. The dead cannot regain their lost lives but with this compensatory move for the families of the dead, “the souls of the dead might be closer to resting in peace” (Martin, 2012, p.19). Overall, reparation aid victim’s journey of recovery by benefiting progressive memory and at the same time opening a new page on which to write reframed mindsets.

2.4.3 Transitional justice and reconciliation

Abuses against human rights in times of war call for strategies of dealing with atrocities as a means of reconstituting such torn societies. Wanton economic destructions and massacres visited upon populations in places like Yugoslavia, Rwanda or East Timor necessitated the need to deal with war crimes. The threat posed by the recurrence of genocide, rape, economic depravity and displacement of

populations compel states to transform so that they “can build systems where the rule of law, and human rights protection can flourish” (Clara, 2011, p.1). World over some of these mechanisms have included “truth commissions [as was the case in South Africa and Kenya], judicial mechanisms, reparations, and institutional reforms” (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2014, p.5). “Transitional justice, though not a new phenomenon, re-emerged in the early 1990s” (Taina, 2004, p.37) as one of the ways of evolving out of a conflict society while at the same time reassuring the future security and stability of states and nations.

This study conceptualizes transitional justices in terms of judicial and non-judicial processes which seek to redress violations of human rights. According to United Nation’s Annan (2004, p.4), “Transitional justice is the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation.” Though Clara (2011) critiques this definition for lacking (among other things) a road map and mechanisms for dealing with such past abuses, she concedes that dealing with the relics of atrocities and foiling their further manifestations are businesses of any transitional attempts.

Plurality of thought exists on the notion of transitional justice especially in relation to healing and reconciliation in a post-conflict society. Proponents of prosecutions in a legal system envisage a situation in which the offenders are brought to book for the crimes they committed. In Huyse (2008) is the view that “a post-conflict society has a moral obligation to prosecute and punish the perpetrators” (p.3) in order to restore their sense of worth. Trials are thus seen as mechanisms which:

identify the offenders, hold them accountable for their actions and deter further occurrences of such crimes. Bloomfield (2006), terms this legal approach of calling the guilty to account, and punishing them for their wrong-doing retributive justice. Opposing thoughts hold that prosecutions have some limitations and may not be appropriate in every post-conflict context. Huyse (2008) counters that prosecution “can have highly destabilizing effects on a peace settlement” (p.4). The pessimism in a legal system, in its narrow sense, is that it can be counterproductive and might end up fracturing peace in fragile situations. Instead, Bloomfield (2006) roots for restorative justice; “where, crucially, priority is given to the subsequent restoring of relationships between victim and offender communities” (p.21). The bigger picture of restorative justice which ties it to reconciliation is that it brings together the perpetrator and the victim through such process as retribution for purposes of treating trauma of conflicts and recreating society.

Playwrights, novelists, film writers and the subsequent directors of such productions have, in some instances, resorted to the rule of law in order to resolve conflicts created in their fictional works. In the Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare uses the court scene to foreground the need for reconciling the opposing religious forces between Shylock (Jew) and Antonio (Christian). In The River Between by Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Waiyaki for all his troubles of reconciling the ridges, is brought before the tribe to answer to charges of betrayal for his dalliance with the white man and the white man’s agents.

The legal justice system is suggested as an option to confronting the past in *Barabbas*. Barabbas is arraigned in court for inciting the masses to violence while Sergeant Philemon faces charges of excessive use of firearms. In this performance-text, Ondiech Malala designs a hybrid court: the jury is composed both of a professional judge and the entire community, a blend of western legal system and traditional African legal procedures. The aforementioned amalgam is corroborated by Schechner's (2002, 2003) notion of hybridity in performance. Equally, given Schechner's argument that theatre draws its material from the society, it is possible Ondiech Malala's choice was informed by Rwanda's example in which **Gacaca** court system was used to dispense of cases emanating from the 2004 genocide. A community driven judicial process inculcates "a shared sense of condemnation of the crimes committed" (Adriaan, 2010, p.579) and equally solidifies the notion of a collective future. The post-genocide Rwandan government "modernized *Gacaca* process as an attempt to combine elements of justice and of reconciliation" (Bloomfield, 2006, p.18).

In *Barabbas*, the presiding judge and the community take charge to shame Barabbas, a perpetrator of violent conflicts, in society by offering a condemnatory judgment; he is to hang. Sentencing a perpetrator of violence to death is in itself a dead end exercise. The community driven jury is obsessed with the punitive measures against Barabbas and not his behaviour transformation. Retributive justice in such a case, Huyse (2008) says, "Is perpetrator-oriented" at the expense of "healing the victims of the injustices" (p.4). Equally disturbing is the reaction of the public upon the pronouncements; they cheer in dance and song. Their singing and dancing, poorly choreographed as they are, seem to take pleasure in Barabbas'

impending death. This action which marks the end of the show receives scanty applause from the spectators and even this does not probably go beyond the ritualistic theatre courtesy. Critically, the notion of an eye for an eye needs to be reconsidered especially in the context of *Barabbas*. Mechanisms that go the judicial way need to be carefully structured lest they slip into revenge missions thereby jeopardizing the very reconciliation they were pursuing. Theatre for reconciliation should strike a balance between making aggressors bear responsibilities of their acts and the need to forge a collective society. In any case, just as Rob and Dennis suggest, “Victims achieve a greater sense of empowerment for having turned an offender from repeat crime than from relishing the offender’s punishment” (2011, p.59).

On a more positive note, *Barabbas*’ co-accused (Sergeant Philemon) is pardoned. It might help that the mitigating factors to this verdict included the fact that during the trial, Sergeant Philemon declared himself a self-convicted homicide. The truth revealed to the audience through flashback that the communal court chooses to close is the obvious guilt of Sergeant Philemon. He himself says he doesn’t deserve a pinch of mercy for having shot at the rioters without restraint. Reconciliatory justice, Bloomfield (2006, p.18) says, “Require compromises in carrying out full-fledged justice against wrongdoers.” Acquitting Sergeant Philemon in total disregard of legal evidences delineates a social system of good and evil the foundation upon which a peaceful outlook can be grounded. Drawing from the performance of *Barabbas*, in this light therefore, theatre for reconciliation ought not to pursue retributive justice merely to hold perpetrators for their crimes. Fully addressing the circumstances of conflicts is more beneficial to the building of

confidence in the belief for a shared tomorrow. The theatre space can be more helpful to the national healing and reconciliation process if its signifiers are those which, without appearing to condone impunity, provide avenues for reintegration of aggressors into a peacefully redefined society.

2.4.4 Healing and Reconciliation Dilemmas in *Messiah*, *The Broken Pot*, *Barabbas* and *Forty Minutes*.

Whereas these performance-texts are elementary enough to engage the spectators on national issues relating to healing and reconciliation, the constructions of their narratives can be blighted. In particular, healing and reconciliation in *Messiah* falls short of the threshold which may ensure lasting peace in society for two reasons. Even though Captain Zakayo's plight and incessant urge to negotiate for peace attract sympathy and appreciation given his past life (an inciter whose utterances led to the maiming and eventual death of Mnyonge), the spectator is compelled to dig deeper into the motivation behind this urge to return Maliako to the Bamilia community. It is clear that he is motivated by the singular selfish wish to regain his sight. The audience might wonder whether Captain Zakayo would still have reached out to his 'enemies' had it not been for his blindness.

Secondly, the new power brokers fail to verbalize forgiveness, if any; to Captain Zakayo and as a result he casts an alienated figure. Reintegration of Captain Zakayo into the new order would enhance mutual linkages in society. Another question mark can be pegged in the flashback scene in which Mnyonge's burial is recounted. With the memory of Mnyonge's burial, the play unfortunately turns an artistic platform into a pulpit sermon. The audience in a theater performance ought to be critically provoked into thoughts, emotions, feelings and actions which cumulatively provide roadmaps to constructive handling of conflicts yet the language

goes out flat to campaign for peace as evidenced in Wanga's reporting of his father's burial.

“...as we poured the final dust, I was advised by my uncle to bury the hatchet, to bury the past, to bury the tribal hatred, to bury the violence of the past and to allow peace, truth and reconciliation to be born (38:22).”

The reconciliation dilemma in *Barabbas* as already discussed in the section on transitional justice lies in its resolution. It is clear that unless the masses who are 'crying' for the release of Barabbas are liberated in their thoughts, a vicious cycle of what performance theorists call "restored behaviour" (Schechner, 2002, p.28) in which acts of revenge upon revenge are committed is likely to continue. Just like Shakespeare's judge Portia in Merchant of Venice, judge in *Barabbas* tempers justice with mercy by freeing Sergeant Philemon: unlike the biblical Pilate, the lady justice condemns Barabbas to his death. While it is easily agreeable that because he has made a confession Sergeant Philemon deserves to be forgiven, sentencing Barabbas to hang invites certain questions. Was tempering of justice with mercy only applicable to Sergeant Philemon and not Barabbas? Just as the character Rebecca asks, "What happens to healing and reconciliation?" The response is that the idea of reconciliation, in the true sense of the word, seems bungled up with the impending crucifixion of the character Barabbas. To this end, "judicial process becomes not a vehicle for reconciliation but for retribution" (Amy & Karen, 2005 p.58). Reconciliation goes beyond 'quick fix' resolutions because "certain scenarios might remain unresolved if resolution is looked at as a final fixation" (David, 2002, p.3).

This critique appreciates both the duty of making aggressors pay for their debts and the towering of self-consciousness over ethnic and partisan ideologies call in order for harmony to exist in society. However, the juxtaposition of the two verdicts: hanging of Barabbas and pardoning of sergeant Philemon presents a theatre for reconciliation quandary. May be, Ondiech Malala is inviting the audience to a debate whose effect should be to tilt the scale so as to heal, reconcile and forge a new joint identity for parties which hitherto had been divided.

In *The Broken Pot* are crucial missing links in the narrative which could otherwise offer certain explanations with regard to understanding healing and reconciliation process. How Cherono's father survived the ordeal that led to the death of his wife is an omission which could have helped in tracing the source of animosity. In *Forty Minutes*, Daudi's futile attempt to fight professor who is now a member of parliament is seen as an indication of self-realization and subsequent need to eliminate the problem at its source but it is not informed by wisdom. Given the power and influence of Professor, Daudi's solitary efforts can only come to naught. He needs to apologize to Kwame first, and then in unity they can clip the powers of the professor through legitimate means. Peaceful coexistence can be fostered through such purposeful unity. To shift the balance of power from the dominant side in a conflict situation, such self-consciousness on the part of the less privileged masses needs to marshal the collective consciousness in order to create a determined advocacy which can bring about progressive behaviour. As noted by Bagshaw et.al. (2005), "Creating consciousness is a necessary condition for conflict management" (p.69).

2.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the narrative contents of each of the performance-texts. In their narratives, the performances-texts' attempts at healing and reconciliation are preceded by memory of the violent conflicts. Just like Kenya's PEV of 2007/2 was blamed on "long standing unresolved conflicts" (Peters, 2013, p.49), these performance-texts identify unemployment, incitements by politicians, unequal distribution of economic resources and escalating costs of living as some of the causes of conflicts in society. In a study by NCIC (2012b), politics is viewed as the main source of ethnic violence because of the hate speech propagated by the politicians. As Odhiambo (2011) is wont to say, "The politicians in these performances incite the youth into violence for their selfish gains just like their counterparts in post independent Africa do" (p.51). Ugly as these scenes might look; the learning inherent in memory is too precious to be ignored. The insight achieved from the "backward glance" (Odhiambo, 2011, p.53) advantages the nation (re)building dream. Dressing these wounds is one step towards a new collective identity of a healed nation.

By way of resolutions of their conflicts, these performance-texts offer suggestions that can aid the quest for healing and reconciliation. Apart from rooting for candid tackling of the root causes of conflicts, *Messiah*, *Forty Minutes*, *Barabbas*, and *The Broken Pot* dig for forgiveness, confession and admission of guilt, expiation, reparation and transitional justice as alternative roads to peace building in a post-conflict society. The multiplicity of performance theory by which it is partly defined, to echo Janelle and Joseph (2007), can be invoked in blending these approaches. Since these creative strategies are not mutually exclusive, a

combination of a number of them, as context may warrant, would be a try worth the healing and reconciliation energy.

The next chapter explores the stage performances of actors and actresses in terms of words and actions which impact on healing and reconciliation.

CHAPTER THREE: ACTORS AND ACTRESSES PERFORMANCES IN RESPECT TO HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

3.1 Chapter Introduction

In the previous chapter was a discussion on the narrative contents of each of the performance-texts under study and how the same is constructed around the theme of national healing and reconciliation. This chapter discusses the performer's action and language; mapping how events of healing and reconciliation are physically and linguistically performed. The discussion is modeled on the linguistic speech act theory and its application to theatre. The discussion identifies common trends in the sampled plays' language usage which impact on the healing and reconciliation process. Equally, the performers' blocking, gestural codes and stage movements and how these reveal their dispositions towards other performers in relation to healing and reconciliation are also discussed. From Schechner's (2003) performance theory perspective, the performer is part of a pyramid of staging elements and is defined by his/her stage acting (vocal and physical actions). This chapter therefore pursues a discussion on how the performer's speech and physical action produce effect on healing and reconciliation.

3.2 Dramatic Dialogue

That verbal language as a set of signs in a theatre performance is a concept shared among performance theorists, theatre semioticians and linguists. Dialogue between interlocutors is important on two fronts; first, performers communicate through it, and secondly, it provides a linkage between the performers and the audience. To segment this dialogue, this study operates at and above the sentence

structure. This choice is informed by Rozik (1997) who says, “A performance text’s minimal unit is an iconic sentence that describes a single action/act” (p.34).

By analyzing the characters’ conversation, judgment is here intended to determine whether or not the characters’ verbal language spurs healing and reconciliation. Given the multifaceted nature of theatre performance-text, a plural approach to linguistic analysis in order to “capture the richness of character” (Benison, 2002, p.67) is deemed necessary. The current scrutiny is premised on speech act theory and to an extent, its offshoot; pragmatics politeness theory. A speaker’s utterance and the entire dramatic dialogue not only carry the meaning but equally bear with them corresponding actions. Therefore, characters’ speech, just like their non-verbal behaviour becomes a topic of performance. Language, in this study, is thus analyzed not just as a sender of information but also as a catalyst of action (performance) which has bearing on conflict, healing and reconciliation.

3.2.1 Speech-Acting Reconciliation

As already discussed in chapter one, Austin’s (1962) speech act theory holds that an utterance does not just make references. Instead, a speech act performs some action. The use of performatives ‘I do’ or ‘I swear’ imply some action. Austin refers to the bare meaning contained in an utterance as locutionary, the force of action in an utterance as illocutionary act and the effect created in the hearer by the illocution force as the perlocutionary effect. Abrams and Geoffrey (2009) argue, “Performative language does not just make reference but also brings the situation to life” (p.339). Because of its illocutionary nature, dramatic dialogue is often analysed in terms of speech act theory.

Locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary concepts lend insights into the understanding of the performance-texts of *Barabbas*, *Forty Minutes*, *Messiah*, and *The Broken Pot*. Core to the three fields of speech act, theatre and conflict management are the pragmatics of; the intentions of the interlocutors, the effects of the ‘iconic sentences’ on the perceived hearer/audience and the social circumstances of the performance. An action is (linguistically) performed with an intended successful effect upon the audience within a given space and time. This action, in agreement with Austin, is performed within certain conventions. Likewise, Searle’s (1969) performative utterances cannot be divorced from their speakers, settings and hearers.

Healing and reconciliation efforts are aimed at persuading feuding parties to abandon their strained relationship and acquire a new one which is ‘happy.’ In *The Broken Pot*, The teachers’ and the pupils’ various sentences bear both locutionary and illocutionary forces whose effects are to ‘urge’ the two girls to forgive one another. The head teacher says, “Now children can you shake hands as Ms. Mkulima, other pupils and I witness a new beginning? Come on, girls” (*Broken Pot*, 28:21). The ‘uptake’ of the girls is that this is a request (not a question on their ability) to shake hands. Even though the utterance lacks Austin’s explicit subject of the verb, it still achieves a ‘happy’ result. Further, in spite of having been cajoled, Cherono and Nakweya have the ability to forgive each other and it is primarily between the two of them. The ‘preparatory condition’ informs the audience that the duo are capable of forgiving one another and that the act will be beneficial to them. The performances of all the speech acts targeted at reconciliation become, in the words of Austin, ‘successful’ not only because Nakweya and Cherono have now linguistically agreed

to bury the hatchet but also because of the accompanying nonverbal actions; an embrace. Alston (2002) and Hornsby (2002) look at speech acts as things which can be done by use of words. Being indexes of action, speech acts; Rozik (1997) concurs, “Are non-verbal” (p.91). For every utterance, according to Searle (1969), there is an underlying action as a consequence. Every word meant to heal and reconcile warring parties should be matched with a corresponding nonverbal action.

The illocutionary effect of the numerous utterances meant to persuade Kwame to donate blood to Daudi in *Forty Minutes* can be adjudged successful. Janet’s final fruitful plea to Kwame says, “I beseech you by the mercy of God to donate blood to save Daudi” (*Forty Minutes*, 37:13). This utterance has an illocutionary force of persuasion and if successful will see Kwame donate the much needed blood. Janet is in authority to ask for blood donation on behalf of her sick husband and is genuine about it. It has to be noted that Janet and Doctor make similar requests a number of times before the utterances can produce a perlocutionary effect upon the hearer (Kwame). It takes Kwame a considerable forty minutes to ‘uptake’ the speaker’s (Janet’s) intentions. Kwame responds by saying, “Okay, for your sake, I will donate blood” (*Forty Minutes*, 37:19). Kwame’s speech act has the force of a promise and can only be happy if it meets the essential condition which obliges a speaker to undertake the action declared. This speech act is informed by the preparatory condition that Kwame has blood that is compatible to Daudi’s and that he is also willing to donate it. Austin’s illocutionary force is realized over time when Janet successfully persuades Kwame who consents not just verbally but actually does donate blood. Austin conceives some sort of emotional attachment to an utterance without which the procedure stands abused. In accepting and in donating blood,

Kwame provides indications of his sincerity and commitment to reconciliation. Daudi, awed by Kwame's magnanimity, hugs Kwame as a sign of gratitude. The end result is, according to Austin (1962), happy.

A speech act of confession signifies admittance of guilt, opens a window for forgiveness and lays ground for healing and reconciliation. At the beginning of *Barabbas*, Sergeant Philemon confesses before the court that his hands are black stained. By this utterance, Sergeant Philemon acknowledges guilt and to the audience, his confession means he is asking for forgiveness given the threat of the noose. However, in a dramatic twist, he does not ask for forgiveness. Instead he says to the judge, "your honour, order your hangman to take me away from this sinful world" (*Barabbas*, 5:03). The 'locutionary' and 'perlocutionary' force of this utterance is rather bizzare; he wants to be killed. The utterance 'misfires' as it does not convince the judge to hang Sergeant Philemon. Philemon's confession is one that necessitates forgiveness even though he doesn't ask for it. Sentencing Philemon, in the wisdom of the jury, is a case of turning a small stone. This judgment is crucial to healing and reconciliation. Forgiving Philemon on the basis of his truthful confession unbolts the door for reconciliation.

Healing and reconciliation can be hampered by the gap that exists between the illocutionary intention of a speaker and the perlocutionary effect on the hearer. An accusation has the intention of producing a confession (Lowe, 2002). In *Barabbas*, the community expects Barabbas to confess his guilt but he does not even in the face of a threat of being hanged. Instead, he maintains that he is innocent when he says, "The commission of inquiry... found me innocent". Austin balances such a situation by reasoning that "a perlocutionary act may either be the achievement of a

perlocutionary ‘object’ or the production of a perlocutionary ‘sequel’” (1962, p.118). While the object is that which is intended by the speaker, the sequel is the unanticipated result emanating from the hearer’s ‘uptake’ of the speaker’s utterance. Barabbas’ denial is thus unintended sequel (achievement). Fortunately, the accusers have evidence establishing that Barabbas is indeed abusing ‘accepted conventions’ or not fulfilling the ‘sincerity condition.’ For abusing such a crucial condition, in the given context, the judge and the sentient masses declare him guilty. The accusation of incitement becomes ‘happy’ even though it produces unintended perlocutionary effect (denial) on the hearer. Confession and expiation acts, however lenient the latter is, would be more beneficial to healing and reconciliation. In order to achieve positive peace and lasting reconciliation, such processes calls for truthfulness.

A confession or such acts of recognition of guilt, in the context of healing and reconciliation, would be more meaningful if they are not extracted out of duress. Austin takes exception to performatives that are “done under duress” (1962, p.21). Because he wants to regain his sight, Captain Zakayo in *Messiah* accepts to untie the knot he had tied twenty years ago. The perlocutionary effects of Messiah’s order are twofold: Captain Zakayo giving back Maliako and the captaincy and in return he will get his sight back. Captain Zakayo’s conciliatory overtures become suspect considering that he is keen on getting his sight back. Further, when Maliako tells him to hand over captaincy to Isaiah, he retorts; “That will take the captaincy back to an enemy tribe” (*Messiah*, 33:38). His response questions his sincerity and commitment to a lasting peace deal. It can therefore be noted that Captain Zakayo’s compensation of the victims is only because he intends to get a favour as well.

Failure to meet the felicity conditions will result in ‘unhappy’ situation for speech act theorists, more strife for conflict managers and unresolved conflict for dramatists. In *Messiah*, Captain Zakayo asks for forgiveness as his own set precondition to reconciliation. He asks for this from the people of Bamilia because he believes they have the ability to. However, no such forgiveness is offered and the achievement is ‘unhappy.’ The ‘uptake’ of his addressee’s is that before Captain Zakayo can be forgiven, he has to return what he had stolen: his wife and captaincy to the people of Bamilia. Meeting these conditions through acts of reparation prepare grounds for healing and reconciliation.

As shown in the discussion, speech act theory has been useful in understanding character motivations. The discussion shows the power of language in influencing human actions. Through theatre, speech acts which impel animosity can be transformed to those which propel positive relations. When applied to conflict management, the felicity conditions calls upon sincerity and utmost faith in utterances about reconciliation. Aggressors who utter apologies for their wrongdoing and promises of transformation should mean their words; likewise, their victims ought to ‘uptake’ such intentions as acknowledgement of guilt and a promise of their safety. Meeting such conditions and seeing such effects on both sides will ensure a healed, reconciled and ‘happy’ future. Speech act theory as an aspect of performance theory “provides a useful framework for analysis of plays” (Lowe, 2002, p.139) such as *The Broken Pot*, *Messiah*, *Forty Minutes* and *Barabbas* because of the performative nature of violence, confession, forgiveness, reparation and expiation all of which constitute the healing and reconciliation processes.

3.2.2 Politeness in Expression

Ever since Brown and Levinson (1978) modeled a politeness theory from Goffman's (1959) notion of image of the self, there have been varying responses including on the understanding of the term 'politeness.' Leech (1983) underscores the asymmetry in politeness by acknowledging that it is context or hearer based. In most cultures, polite behaviour and therefore polite language refers to "forms of social behaviour that are socially correct or appropriate...mutually shared and displayed in consideration for others" (Watts, 2003, p.8). On the other hand, impoliteness arises from "forms of social behaviour that violate principles of mutual cooperation and the display of consideration for others" (Watts, 2003, p.14).

Central to Brown and Levinson principle (1978) of politeness is face; the image an individual displays to others. They explain two types of faces: positive and negative. Whereas negative face refers to the want of the speaker that his/ her actions be unimpeded, positive face displays the wish of a speaker that his wants be desirable to at least some others (Brown and Levinson). In the view of Brown and Levinson therefore, politeness becomes a redressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of face-threatening acts (FTAs). This study does not use politeness theory to understand characters in the performance-texts but gains from its understanding of the terminology and from its proposition that "any speech act may be face-threatening" (Maryam, 2012 p.352) and that politeness is a strategy for lessening a threat especially to others thereby saving their faces.

The courteous use of language in extending socially acceptable manners and respect to others is what this study considers to be politeness in language. This view is upheld by Culpeper (2002) who conceives politeness as the “strategic manipulation of language; about expending conversational goals by saying what is socially appropriate” (p.83). Conversely, to Culpeper, “Impoliteness is the use of linguistics as an act of threat” (p.86). Impoliteness in language amounts to stratagems which contribute to assault and disequilibrium in society. Benison’s (2002) assertion that through use of language a character may “ingratiate himself [or herself] with others or offend others” (p.67) is of interest to this study. The current focus is on how linguistic performance (speech acts) in *Messiah*, *Forty Minutes*, *The Broken Pot* and *Barabbas* contribute to social (dis)harmony.

Abusive expressions often demean their targets, increase conflict and erode healthy interactions. According to William (2007, p.510), “abusive forms rely on offensive terms and frequently aim to hurt psychologically the individual’s to whom they are directed.” In *Messiah*, Captain Zakayo tells his wife that she is ugly and empty headed. Captain Zakayo’s utterances are insulting to Maliako and are meant to hurt her. According to Figueres- McDonough (1984) cited in Ndũng’ũ (2010, p.117), “In domestic violence, abused women have been objectified and dehumanized through verbal abuse.” These linguistic atrocities prepare the ground for psychological and physical violence. Significantly, all the physical and verbal assaults fail to get Maliako sign the divorce agreement. When she turns tables on him, Maliako too uses threatening language to bully her way through Captain Zakayo. She even threatens to fart to suffocate him. The two scenarios present cases of “aggression in dialogue” (Culpeper, 2002:85). The 2008 UNCHRfact finding

report about Kenya's 2007/2008 PEV take note of reprisal attacks. Pointedly, in the two cases cited above, the intention of each speaker to bully their addressee's into submission and to gain advantage fail. Negative language, negative thoughts and negative cultures perpetuate conflict in society and ought to be reversed if healing and reconciliation is to be achieved.

Interlocutors in the fictional worlds under study commit acts of linguistic violence through threats and intimidation thereby adding to raised levels of misunderstandings. Daudi refers to Kwame and his people as shameless, arrogant, selfish and ruthless enemies. When he gets his chance Kwame retorts, "I have no friend called Daudi but a merciless enemy" (*Forty Minutes*, 2:52). Kwame metaphorically refers to Daudi as a cousin of Lucifer. The discourse between the two violates social norms. This tit for tat attitude so explicit in the hostile dialogue cannot (re)build relations but can only lead to escalation of fragile situations.

In *The Broken Pottoo*, the friendship between Cherono and Nakweya suffers a blow due to foul language used by their parents who declare no more friendship or playing together between the two. When Cherono refuses to welcome the new pupil (Nakweya), the latter responds by saying that she doesn't like Cherono's ugly dirty mouth near her. This foul language escalates further when Nakweya calls Cherono a cold blooded fox. Cherono returns the favour and refers to Nakweya as 'a filthy nincompoop.' Cherono's abhorrence for Nakweya is summed up in her dreadful language. She says, "I hate Nakweya and her people" (*Broken Pot*, 27:25). The effect of this is a physical fight between the two school girls who go for each other's jugular. It takes the intervention of other pupils and the teachers to separate them by "dealing with lingual-cultural ideas and practices that brew and serve violence"

(Ndũng'ũ, 2010, p.112). These insults are not just aimed at individuals but a whole community. As such, an entire community bears the pain of insult meant for its members. Conversely, an individual verbal aggressor is a representation of his or her lot.

Aggressive forms of language carry the illocutionary force of “inflicting violence and affirming diversity” (Ndũng'ũ, 2010, p.118) and with heightened hostilities, healing and reconciliation get compromised. *Messiah's* Captain Zakayo by the authority of his socio-political position orders, “Take away this piece of Bamilia rubbish away from my ship” (*Messiah*, 27:58), and the illocutionary force of his command is followed by an action of exclusion when Mnyonge is dragged out of the ship. This, in the words of the character Maliako, is a case of “viscious leopards upon a zebra” (*Messiah*, 23:40). For all these, Mwanga declares, on behalf of his fellow Bamilias, that war is born. Captain Zakayo's executive order further wedges the gap between the Bamilia and the Bachui. His order is not only a threat to the face of the Bamilia but also to healing and reconciliation between the warring groups. These unfettered expressions fly on the faces of their victims and not only do they destroy their soul and body but also undermines approved social behaviour.

In *Barabbas*, dialogue between Philemon and Jiwe is often marked with cruelty. Sergeant Philemon is harsh on his brother, taunts him and calls him an idiot. Of his brother, Jiwe says, “He is such a hater” (*Barabbas*, 15:55). There is a communication break down and neither is able to persuade the other to his world view. It is therefore not surprising for the audience to watch Sergeant Philemon kill Jiwe and the other rioters. This tragic viciousness contradicts his earlier position when he was appealing to the rioters to be calm. Back then he said, “We have built

this country together, *kwa nini tuiharibu?*” (Why should we destroy a country we have built together?) (*Barabbas*, 29:47). The violent conflicts witnessed in *Barabbas*, even before they are actualized, are already embedded in language.

The conversational discord between Mwanga and Maliako in *Messiah*, just as others in the performance, adds to tension in the plot. Impoliteness that arises on the question of who should keep little Isaiah is a precursor to “aspects of the fictional world which will be of future consequence” (Culpeper, 2002, p.87). For betraying his brother, Mwanga calls Maliako a witch, shameless harlot and a conniving snake. Fully aware of Maliako’s moral disposition, Mwanga takes the boy away in spite of Maliako’s plea that Mwanga has the blood of the two ethnic communities. Temporarily, this is a win for Mwanga because he takes his nephew away but a loss for Maliako who is separated from her son. In *Barabbas*, Rebecca confronts Mheshimiwa Barabbas headlong and the dialogue that ensues is no recourse to cessation of hostilities. For brainwashing the ignorant lot for his selfish interests, Mheshimiwa Barabbas gets the ‘pig’ tag from Rebecca. This metaphor defines Barabbas as a dirty, filthy and greedy human being. Barabbas too declares Rebecca an ‘enemy of development’ and a stooge of his political distractors.

Language that stereotypes individuals and groups with negative connotations threatens the very fabrics that hold society together. The binary between positive and negative face can be manipulated to vindicate crimes. Indeed, William (2007) says, “Practices of genocide and crimes against humanity begin with classifications which divide people” (p.496). Similarly, Adhikari (2007), William (2007), Huyse (2003a) and the film *Hotel Rwanda (1994)* show that before and during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Tutsi were referred to as *inyenzi* (cockroaches) and this was used, for

example, by Radio Mille Collines to incite extremists to exterminate the Tutsi population. In the 2007/2008 Kenya's post-election violence, the Luo ethnic community were called 'dirty' and uncircumcised by the kikuyu ethnic group while the kikuyu community were called 'thieves' and 'selfish' (NCIC, 2012a). In the heat of the violence in *Forty Minutes*, Kwame's people are referred to as 'cockroaches', 'thieves' and 'aliens' by Daudi's people. Language and labels can perpetuate prejudices that exacerbate differences between and amongst communities (NCIC, 2012b).

The implicature of the cockroach remark is that Kwame and his people are, so to speak, lesser human beings. As such, they deserve treatment worth their (cockroach) level which seemingly is far below that of a human being. 'Alien' as used by the character Professor in *Barabbas* has an illocutionary force of action whose result should be the eviction of non-members. As such, the so called outsiders should be: dispossessed of their belonging, driven away, physically harmed and killed. Discourse that fails to appreciate diversity among individuals and groups serves towards a culture of intolerance leading to (violent) conflict in society.

Hate speech was identified as one of the escalators of violence that rocked Kenya in 2007/2008. In her research on Kenya's 2007/2008 PEV Ndungu (2008) says, "Hate speech was rife in political rallies" (p.114) and in other media. Barabbas the politician in *Barabbas* uses hate language to cause division and incite violence. He uses discourteous language to create group solidarity: a case of 'us' against 'them.' The political class in *Forty Minutes*, *The Broken Pot* and *Messiah* also use hate speech as a propaganda tool for inciting violence. Such discourses which aim to

create division by manipulating the thoughts and actions of the populace work against healing and reconciliation endeavours in a post-conflict society.

The use of dehumanizing language, Huyse (2003b) says, “Creates confusion about the sources of and the accountability for violent behaviour” (p.71). When Professor in *Forty Minutes* gives Daudi an ultimatum to choose whether to obey tribe or betray it, the audience can’t help but empathize with the latter. In this situation, one wonders whether Daudi is an “aggressor who has been coerced into killing, rather than a hateful monster who takes pleasure in brutality” (Applegate, 2012, p.73). Sergeant Philemon in *Barabbas* is equally presented in a similar situation; his boss gives him a shoot to kill order and he duly obliges. In *The Broken Pot*, Cheronon turns against her erstwhile friend on the instruction of her father. Her take of her father’s utterances as absolute truth turns her to perform acts of verbal and physical brutishness against Nakweya. These examples establish a correlation between linguistic utterances and human behaviour and it is that a people’s language informs their thoughts, actions and culture. Because negative language view may “fan the fires of violence” (Ndũng’ũ, 2010, p.118), theatre has a social obligation to metamorphose these discourses into language of positive peace which facilitates “a genuine affirmation of diversity” (William, 2007, p.507). Addressing national healing and reconciliation requires addressing language cultures which blow-up conflicts.

A shift from use of impolite expressions to polite expressions signifies character transformation and by implication attitudinal and behavioural change. As the play *Messiah* draws to its end, the once tough speaking Captain Zakayo has now transformed to an amicable character whose vocabularies are about forgiveness,

peace and reconciliation. Unlike before when he ordered the Bamilia out of his ship, his speech now performs actions of welcome. In *Forty Minutes*, Kwame accepts to donate blood to Daudi irrespective of the past. Through the use of well-bred and charming language, teachers and the pupils in *The Broken Pot* play reconciliatory role. When Cheronno falsely blames Nakweya as the class noise maker, the other pupils rebuke her and indeed demand that she apologizes to Nakweya. The process of apology precipitates reconciliation. The class teacher pleads with the warring girls to pick up their former friendship in order “to promote peace, healing and reconciliation.” The teachers, through their persuasive language, make the girls bury the hatchet and see that they were not guilty of anything but that they themselves were indeed innocent victims of political incitements.

Just like the character Catherine in Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People*, Janet is presented as the embodiment of peace and reconciliation and nothing epitomizes this than her polite and courteous language in *Forty Minutes*. The tactful and shrewd negotiator she is matches every negative feeling expressed by the male aggressors around her with a positive reminder which serves to thaw threats. When Daudi declares war against Kwame, she frantically reminds Daudi of a joint past shared with Kwame. She says, “Kwame has shared with us in all our lack and shared with us in all our successes” (*Forty Minutes*, 16:03). She cajoles Daudi not to hurt Kwame to the extent of threatening to divorce her husband should he fail to take heed. It takes Janet and the doctor the entire period of the play (forty minutes) to convince Kwame to donate blood. Each time Kwame justifies his refusal, she pokes holes into such positions with her meticulous remembrance of the past. The audience learns that Daudi and Janet had named their daughter, Lea, after Kwame’s mother

who was very dear to the couple. In a bid to persuade Kwame to donate blood, Janet tactfully reminds Kwame that Daudi has one kidney: the other is with Kwame for whom he had donated it. When Kwame now dismisses this as pretense, she turns to the stage audience for support:

Dear people, which kind of pretense involves donating a kidney to a friend...No Kwame, we shared basins, food, iron box, and water. I even shared clothes with your wife. (*Forty Minutes*, 08:26)

Janet endlessly beseeches Kwame to save Daudi's life even in the name of God. Kwame bows and agrees to donate blood for the sake of Janet. She remedies hate speech with candid but polite facts about the social nature of human beings. This view is corroborated by Cortese (2006) who suggests that victims might deem it fit to rebut speech that incites violence. Janet's example shows that polite tone and expressions sets the milieu for healing and reconciliation between divided groups.

Courtesy begets courtesy is a politeness tenet that characters (both in the fictional and real world) use not only to receive favours but also to enhance mutual cooperation among them. The wounded medicine man requests Maliako to take some herbs from his bag and rub them on his wounds. When she abides by his entreaty, he is grateful and says, "Thank you Maliako, such should be the co-operation between the two tribes" (*Messiah*, 09:57). In another instance, upon realizing that the medicine man could be the messiah he is hopeful for, Captain Zakayo goes on bended knees and very meekly refers to the medicine man as "my lord." This reveals his reverence for messiah but more importantly, his politeness is intended to get the messiah perform a miracle so that his sight and vision of his mind could be given back to him. A linguistic gesture of courtesy grounded on politeness pillars of thank

you, sorry, please and excuse me augur healing and reconciliation between individuals which can be replicated at the various succeeding levels.

This section has observed that language is a double edged catalyst for harmony in society and as noted by Ndũng'ũ (2010, p.112), "The lingual-cultural factor can be the agent that promotes peace or violence." Theatre as intervention in post conflict situations need to align itself to strategies which help unlearn impoliteness: hate speech, prejudices and stereotypes. Theatre language ought to communicate discourses which promote politeness and bridge social distance: "understanding, acceptance, intimacy and positive social relations" (Cortese, 2006, p.4).

3.2.3 Humour

In the context of a theatre performance, this study construes humour as the quality inherent in the dramatic dialogue or stage objects which make such to be amusing and worth eliciting a response of laughter. This definition is hinged on that of Zelizer (2010) which understands humour as "the quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdity" (p.1). Rod cited in Zelizer (2010) says that humour requires social condition, a cognitive perceptual process, an emotional response and the vocal behavioural expression of laughter. Granted, in a theatre performance communication channel therefore, the director designs something funny which is then sent to the audience through the various theatrical languages. Cognitively, the audience decodes or "uptakes" (Austin, 1962) these texts within a (social) context. The question then becomes, does humour transmute conflict or feed it?

Humour, through its various manifestations, can be used either as a tool or process in conflict management. In fields of psychology and conflict management, “humour is widely used to facilitate healing among groups that have suffered from conflict” (Zelizer, 2010, p.7). However, it needs to be noted that, use of humour or jokes can have a double effect. Wroth (2009), Sorenson (2008), Batruini (2009), Davidheiser (2006) and Ochiel (2008) all cited in Zelizer (2010) variously show that humour can be used to defuse tension or to fuel it. This discussion now turns to the possible impacts of use of humour on healing and reconciliation processes within the worlds of the four plays under scrutiny.

Laughter softens hard facts about conflict and prepares the path for reconciliation. In *Messiah*, the director approaches the very serious issue of conflict management with a tinge of laughter. As the curtain opens, the spectators see Captain Zakayo divorcing his wife through a public auction. He comically replaces the wedding vow with a divorce vow and says to himself:

Captain Zakayo, do you take Maliako to be your lawfully divorced wife, to curse and to look at with bad eyes? Captain Zakayo, you may now miss the bride. (*Messiah*, 03:20)

This speech act gives the audience an opportunity to laugh and may be to get lost in the laughter even if just temporarily. According Freud (1991, p.189), “Laughter helps regulate psychic energy.” Humour, McDonald (2012, p.64) says, “Allows individuals to relieve pent-up energy or let-off steam.” Laughter in a theatre for reconciliation ought to serve beyond escaping from the demands of rational thought as argued by Freud. Beneath this humour is the serious issue of forgiveness that Captain Zakayo is seeking. With this kind of humour, Joseph Murungu stares truthfully at the source of the conflict and hopes to navigate a peaceful coexistence

through expiation. Benign humour, Bloom (2010) argues, “Is warm, tolerant, sympathetic, sensible, sentimental and is of unthreatened norms” (p.89). Gently used jokes pass on to the hearers filtered threats thus enhancing healing and reconciliation either during or after a conflict situation.

Humour has a role in laying bare circumstances, which relate to reconciliation, as they are. This view is upheld by Bloom (2010) who says, “Humour points to the real and laughs benignly or derisively at its deficiencies” (p.89). Through humour, the truth can be told laughingly (Ruganda, 1992). In *Barabbas*, for the one year that the trial has been going on; Sergeant Philemon has remained quiet to prosecution charges. When he decides to speak, he pleads with the judge to hang him and he even threatens to sue the judge for delaying his death. His humorous speech acts are greeted with howls of derision from the auditorium. Underlying these ludicrous utterances is the serious issue that the society is so rotten that Sergeant Philemon does not want to live in it anymore. With regrets, he confesses that his hands are soiled. Curiously, he tells his betrothed that he doesn’t deserve a pinch of her mercy.

I don’t deserve a pinch of your mercy. I have sinned, confessed and my transgressions forgiven. But, the more I live the more I am likely to sin again (*Barabbas*, 4:40).

This conundrum created by Sergeant Philemon’s hilarious confession and the subsequent demands beg the question of wholeheartedness in reconciliation processes. The same situation applies in *Messiah* when Captain Zakayo says that trust is only in the human heart. As pondered by Mekusi (2010, p.86), “How can sincerity of remorse be demonstrated?” A possible irony in these comical confessions

calls to question the issue of truth in the healing and reconciliation process. Saying is not enough; it has to be accompanied by a performance of the same. In other words, remorse that has to beget healing and reconciliation ought to be speech acted even if humorously.

In the play *Barabbas*, Ondiech Malala grapples with the use of humour in purging emotions to set the stage for healing and reconciliation at various levels. In recounting the truth, in *Barabbas*, police brutality is presented in a lighthearted manner. Their performance on stage as perfect parodies of robotic creatures bound by routine which they hardly comprehend melts away the hard feelings against them and replaces it with one of pity. As Zelizer (2010) says, “Humour helps groups deal with tensions, release frustrations and also heal mental emotional wounds” (p.5). The police have been accused of extra-judicial killing; a crime which they execute in a melodramatic manner. The use of humour in such a tragic situation thaws the pain that would accompany such gory scenes. The police are conscious that they have been accused of excessive use of force and their attempt to redeem their image or otherwise to justify their callousness only ends up in their mockery as vindicated in the dialogue below.

COMMANDER : What do you do when your brother comes to you with a raised machete?

CONSTABLE : Shoot him sir.

COMMANDER : What if your uncle comes to you with a raised stone?

SGNT PHILEMON : I shoot him, sir.

COMMANDER : A stone!

SGNT. PHILEMON : Sir, David killed Goliath with a stone

(*Barabbas*, 23:15).

The performance-text of *Forty Minutes* exposes both the political class and their subjects to ridicule. The play mocks Daudi for his vulnerability to manipulation by the Member of Parliament. He turns against Kwame on the instigations of professor. Paradoxically, professor does not even know where his brother-Daudi-stays. It is Kwame who had taken his (Daudi's) wife and children to hospital, and given them food. This prompts the level headed Janet to remind Daudi that he was once locked out when he had gone to seek his blood brother. The comical situation Daudi finds himself in holds a mirror to him so that he may look at his past. That past, even to the members of the audience, shows the folly of violence. Asking people to heal and reconcile includes asking them to avert violence. The performance of *Forty Minutes* makes a call for more creative and non-violent mechanisms for managing conflicts.

If used negatively, humour can stab others, dehumanize communities, perpetuate stereotypes and fuel (violent) conflicts among groups. Derisive humour, Bloom (2010) notes, "Is cold, intolerant, unsympathetic, [is often considered as the] humour of rejection and defended norms" (p.89). Context and tone of delivery are some of the factors upon which humour is dependent. Put in perspective, 'the blood is thicker than water' statement that Daudi utters is a case of negative use of humour. He uses it to rationalize his forsaking of Kwame. "Linguistic violence of jokes contributes to prejudicial attitudes" (Ndũng'ũ, 2010, p.114) towards perceived enemies thereby wrenching positive relations. According to Zelizer, "Humour can be used to demonize others" (2010, p.4). The play *Forty Minutes* satirizes the 'blood is thicker than water' slogan which has been willfully expended to split the populace

who till then had lived together in great geniality regardless of their ethnic extractions. Janet asks Daudi:

Was blood thicker than water when the kids were sick, when you visited him and he turned you away at the gate?"

(Forty Minutes, 13:50)

Humour can be used to break boundaries thereby affirming performance theory notion of 'blurred boundaries.' Quite amusing in *Forty Minutes* is the reality that Daudi and Kwame are now united by blood. There should now be no reason for any hostilities between them. The same utterance about blood being thicker than water was initially used to "express disapprobation" (Cynthia, 1985, p.15) but now humorously used to reinforce approbation. Through this comical production, barriers have been broken and hopefully "humour has been used to break the cycle of violence" (Zelizer, 2010, p.4). If used positively, humour adds to the convergence of theatre and conflict management by expunging emotions, easing tension, building relations and facilitating movement from an unstable point to a point of stability.

Allowing the spectators to laugh at conflicts holds for them, albeit in a relaxed manner, a looking glass that might "reframe the dynamics of conflict" (Zelizer, 2010, p.4). Positive humour has the potential for opening a space for healing and reconciliation. Through its various modes like satire, irony, sarcasm, grotesque or the absurd, "humour constitutes a central narrative strategy" (Wendy, 2005, p.288). The linguistic and physical violence conspicuous in the performance-texts, the directors seem to suggest, are too gory not to be mollified by humour. Managing of emotions, however adversarial, builds to management of conflict during and after its occurrence either in the imagined or real world.

3.3 Stage Movement and Gesticulation

Having looked at the performer's linguistic performance in relation to healing and reconciliation, the discussion in this chapter now turns to the performer's body in space and only in relation to healing and reconciliation. In everyday life, both the animate and the inanimate move from one geographical space to another in varied distances. In film, the camera travels from a location to another. When applied to a theatre stage, movement describes the physical mobility in time and space of a performer from one stage spot to another. An actor/actress gets basic movement guides and directions from the script or as wished by the director of the play. Marian and Jack (2008) while equating movement to choreography argue that "movement is essential to the story, the character, the scene and the moment" (p.141). Barasa and Minishi (2004) contend that stage movement should be both out of purpose and compulsion. This therefore means that blocking should be carefully designed so as to inform on characterization as it gives insights useful in fortifying a play's idea(s). This section discusses those stage movements which have bearings on healing and reconciliation.

It is important to note that there are other observable behaviours of characters on stage that may not necessarily entail physical relocation of the human body on stage. Behaviours like combing the hair, chewing a gum or scratching one's head equally contribute towards understanding a character. "Stage business" is the term Fran (1995, p.85) uses to describe these 'small actions' that the character performs without moving from one place to another. A study of character motivation for movement and stage mannerisms would, for this study, bring to fore justification for language and behaviour that impact on healing and reconciliation practices.

Whether static or in motion, performer's movement and speech is often accompanied by some communicative corporeal exploits otherwise known as gestures. The performer's face, eye, hand and arm all add to the character's attributes. The manipulation of these features in relation to other characters often reveal about a character's attitudes. Either as texts unto themselves or as reinforcements of the verbal dialogue, this study finds these attributes necessary in comprehending issues of healing and reconciliation.

In his reading of Bertolt Brecht's theory of *gestus*, Carl (2000, p.41) says, *gestus* in relation to the actor, refers to the ensemble of all physical behaviour the actor displays when showing us a character on stage by way of his/her social interactions." *Gestus* therefore refers to the totality of the actor's tools which include body movements, gestures, facial expressions, make-up and other techniques which help bring out a character's image. Brecht contends that gestural language should be memorable to warrant its quoting. For instance, if after watching a play or movie, young people walk, or strut just like a character they have watched, then those gestures or movements were quotable. Thus, an image created on stage should be one that communicates efficiently just like the spoken word. At this point, this study explores the actors' gestures and body movements not only in disseminating information about healing and reconciliation but also in engaging the spectators into critical inspection of the issues raised. The focus is first on those 'quotable and memorable' postures which tend to spiral tension among characters before turning to those which improve relations between and among characters.

Stage directions and body positions which cause physical harm to other characters only add to fueling of antagonism. In *Messiah*, Captain Zakayo literally sits on Maliako; she is down with her belly on the floor as he exerts his weight on her. He threatens to fart so as to suffocate her further. Even under the weight of Zakayo, Maliako refuses to sign the divorce agreement. Later, the same scene is reenacted only that the roles have been reversed. Now it is Maliako sitting upon Captain Zakayo as she takes her revenge on the captain. "Lying and sitting down are generally weak stage positions" (Fran, 1995, p.83) and with these positions the director seems to dwarf such actions and appear to dissuade spectators from such acts which cause discomfort to others. Realizing that his use of brute force does not bear fruits, Captain Zakayo changes tact by going down on his knees. Maliako is awed by this gesture of friendliness; she puts on a broad smile, the persuasion of the playwright towards reconciliation.

Viewed from the game principle of performance theory, enactments of stage tussles are but "testing strategies needed to master human environment" (Alter, 1990, p.40). In *Messiah*, Mwanga and Maliako are in a tussle over the little Isaiah; each one of them is pulling the child to his or her side. Just like was the case in the bible over the two prostitutes who were haggling over a child before King Solomon, the true and loving mother lets go. The shot (to use filmic language) of the two pulling the child is 'a theatre game' symptomizing the social struggles in everyday life and man's strategies of solving them. With this stage frame, it is possible Joseph Murungu is drawing attention of the audience to the 2007/2008 political turmoil which threatened to tear apart the Kenyan nation. In tandem with Lisa's (2005) argument that "there are social dimensions of conflicts" (p.36), the current standoff

between Mwanga and Maliako is socially constructed. At another level though, Isaiah's body is a metaphorical treasure to both sides but tearing him apart adds no value. Differences in society, the director of the performance suggests, must not be used to destroy it; a society's diversity should be the base for its strength, unity, healing and reconciliation.

The stage combat scene in which the police break up the rioters and kill some of them in the play *Barabbas* is a sad spectacle that directs the audience to the root cause of conflicts. Similarly in *Forty Minutes*, the violent scenes in which Kwame is almost killed in Daudi's house by professor's hirelings and the scene in which Daudi is shot at and wounded are black spots which call for cessation of hostilities in the spirit of healing and reconciliation. The directors choose to replay these violent episodes as a way of keeping the audience abreast with the prevailing need for healing and reconciliation. The staging of physical fights between Nakweya and Cheronno in *The Broken Pot* and such other episodes are understood to mean their usefulness in retelling the audience of the violent past but most importantly in leading the audience to a harmonious present and future. The same understanding is applicable to the actions in *Messiah* in which Mnyonge is murdered and when the Bachui raise their swords ready to attack the Bamilia. In a post-conflict society, Nyokabi (2010) argues, "It is difficult to reflect on peace without deliberating about conflict" (p.191). Attempts aimed at reconstruction of a new common identity, according to Mda (2002, p.280), "Should not attempt to erase the past." Memory of these bitter and gory violent past is done in order to improve the present.

Fictional characters entangled in conflict tend to keep away from each other in a similar way they do in real life. Theatre stage, performance theorists argue, merges the fictional and the reality (Alter (1990). In *Forty Minutes*, the curtain opens with Daudi lying in a hospital bed. Kwame who had been invited by Janet keeps a safe distance the very way “People who dislike each other generally keep at a distance” (Fran, 1995, p.80). He is stuck at the stage left ever moving up stage while the patient is centrally placed at the back. This blocking reveals that the relation between Daudi and Kwame is riven; they are physically and emotionally apart. Even with that far distance he is ever looking into the auditorium, away from Daudi and if he ever moves towards the patient, it is to register his disgust with him. In one situation, he moves there and says, “Let him die” (*Forty Minutes*, 4:30). Kwame’s wrinkled face, bulging eyes and sinewy hands and arms look heightened not only to bridge the distance between the stage and the auditorium but also to register his disapproval of Daudi. In the name of the show, theatre role plays lives lived in the material world so as to influence the audience. The director, Nelson Ashitiva, suggests that healing and reconciliation cannot be achieved with such far apart body positioning. Stage acting aimed at uniting antagonists must bridge the physical distance as a way of persuading the audience to take a cue from the same.

Transforming characters through movements and body gestures which show compassion so as to positively influence social intercourse is a task the performance-texts belabour. When Kwame in *Forty Minutes* finally agrees to donate blood, he moves nearer Daudi and once more empathizes with him. This closeness is only observable among people who are “fond of one another” (Fran, 1995, p.80). By giving Daudi a full body profile, away from the audience, dramatic focus shifts to the

blood that is being transfused and its significance to reconciliation. Worth noting too is that Daudi's going into convulsion hastened Kwame into showing mercy. The sight of another dead body before him is too bothersome to contemplate.

In *Barabbas* the judge symbolically removes the noose around Sergeant Philemon's neck. Conversely, it is now the turn of Barabbas to bear responsibility of his actions. This change of fortune, which is communicated by way of body movement and gestures, signifies transformation in society. However, that Barabbas is directed to the noose casts a doubt on the healing and reconciliation project. In *Messiah*, Captain Zakayo moves closer to the supposed body of the messiah, touches him, feels the mark of nails on messiah's hands and feels his blood. This close proximity establishes Captain Zakayo's fear for messiah and upon confirmation, he immediately kneels in supplication. His hands are held together in a prayer gesture to point to his sincerity and determination. His face is one that shows reverence to the lord: he speaks to the messiah at a very close range and smiles signifying loyalty. Captain Zakayo's smile sums up his desires for peace and reconciliation. Close physical blocking of characters improve healthy interactions thereby setting the right tone for healing and reconciliation in a post conflict situation.

Handshakes between hitherto enemies are rituals which have the capacity to bind a relationship (Schechner 2008) and induce hope thereby contributing to reconciliation project. Among the 'primitive tribes' and in ancient times, shaking of hand was performed to hinder the opponent from hitting one (Schechner 2008, Allan & Barbra 2004). In her book Peace Building and Conflict Transformation, Schilling (2012) says, "Forms of greetings like shaking hands, kisses and hugs are generally done as rituals of politeness" (p.58). When such actions are "generalized and

regularized” they “can serve as instruments of reconciliation” (Ross, 2009, p.211). In *The Broken Pot*, Cheronno and Nakweya interlock and shake their palms as a sign of trust, equality, welcome and mutual respect (Allan & Barbra, 2004) that presently define their reconciled relationship. Considering that the handshake evolved partly as a gesture of sealing an agreement (Allan & Barbra, 2004), this noble friendly action between Cheronno and Nakweya, which is witnessed by their school mates and teachers, draws the line between the past and the new beginning, and is a way of cementing the deals of peace and harmony.

The image of reconciliation embodied in an embrace elicits, in the spectator, some diagnostic thinking which may give way to decisions which sway positive behaviour in relation to coherence in society. In *Forty Minutes*, the aggressor (Daudi) and the tormented (Kwame) after burying the hatchet come face to face in a warm and affectionate embrace as a mark of a direct forgiveness. The hug between Kwame and Daudi is both memorable and quotable to the spectators. Their bonding yields an image of a “socially conditioned behaviour that, in turn, conditions the functioning of society” (Carl, 2005, p.41). The duo not only hugs as a way of comforting each other out of the harrowing experiences but also congratulate each other in their new achievement of peaceful coexistence. The back patting that goes on alongside the hug can be assumed to be a gesture of warmth and affection (Allan & Barbra 2004). Schechner (2008) considers hugs as ritual codes “signaling participants agreement to partake of normative social solidarity, enacting/communicating shared values” (p.779).

Importantly, the (re)establishment of relations between Daudi and Kwame is uniquely transformational. “Good relations”, Lisa (2005, p.35) argues, “are central to addressing conflict constructively.” Kwame and Daudi (re)gain fresh and reinvigorating perceptions about one another. These new angles foreshadow healing and reconciliation. In a ritualistic performance of a warm embrace, the two men forego the dirty past. The auditorium audience applauds them as a symbol of their acceptance of the invitation to be part of communal enactments of these unifying symbolic gestures of the reconciliation.

Stage blockings and movements which play into the auditorium invite the spectators to partake in the healing and reconciliation life. This proposition derives from Fran (1995) who says, “Downstage is stronger than upstage area because it is nearer to the audience” (p.73). As such, actions performed nearer the audience are likely to have more impact. In a well-choreographed movement in *The Broken Pot*, the performers pick roses and step downstage into the auditorium. A movement brought that closer to the audience is meant to rivet the audience’s attention to it. In effect, that particular stage direction bids to amass connotative and cognitive appeal with regard to healing and reconciliation. That the actors/actresses give out the white roses they are holding to the spectators is both a delivered symbol and an interactive way of engaging the audience into the discourse of reconciliation.

In the theatrical spectacle of a human heart that projects out of a human body, Joseph Murungu’s *Messiah* enhances dialogue about the functioning of the human heart as much as it does about equitable distribution of common resources in real world. Murungu’s message to the leadership of Kenyan society, at whatever level, is the need to (re)distribute resources equitably to all regions the very way the blood

pumped from the heart goes to all parts of a human body. This call tallies with that of conflict scholars who have suggested “rational, objective and logical problem solving approaches to the material dimension of conflict” (Lisa, 2005, p.31). Even though human wants are insatiable, allowing back the Bachui in the ship and giving the ship’s mantle to Isaiah prepares ground for a reconciliation of the past with the present. “Effective conflict management needs to address both competing interests and compatible identities” (Ross, 2009, p.199). Not only does this quench the material need but the symbolic meanings attached to identity of belonging.

In summary, this section has noted that behind every character movement is a cogent justification and motivation for the action. While those body postures of aggressions were necessary in replaying the past, those of cordiality have been useful in directing the audience towards a new desired relationship of heartiness. The roles played out by actors/actresses are not just those of the fictional characters whom they represent but are also those played by human beings in truth. Considering that performance theory looks at theatre as a rehearsal to life (Alter 1990), the desire for and realization of reconciliation between the imagined antagonists merge with the reality it reflects. The persuasion of such impeccable acting is to inspire the audience to institutionalize gestures of good will displayed on stage.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

From a linguistic point of view, this chapter has reiterated that a character’s verbal utterances on stage, just like in everyday conversation, do perform certain acts. These speech acts are double edged insofar as healing and reconciliation is concerned. The aggressors have been noted to issue discourteous language, negative

humour and face-threatening utterances which trigger more conflict among the populace.

For healing and reconciliation to be realized, speakers ought to lessen the severity of face-threatening speech acts. In these dramatic dialogues, healing is made possible through healthy dialogue. In *Forty Minutes*, Janet's polite words coupled with Kwame's forgiving temperament do not just help reconcile Daudi and Kwame but also contribute towards healing the nation by positively influencing the spectators. Central in *Messiah* is the linguistic transformation witnessed in the provocative Captain Zakayo. He changes from an abusive, insolent and offensive speech actor to a more polite, humble and conciliatory charmer. Significantly, in *Barabbas*, language of cruelty seen in nearly all the characters is reversed by their gaining of a mental consciousness. Language, in this case, is synonymous to mental faculties.

The stage combat/violent scenes in *Barabbas*, *The Broken Pot* and *Forty Minutes*, and the discomfiting physical pain that captain Zakayo and Maliako inflict on each other in *Messiah* are stage blockings which augment conflict. Equally, characters that are in conflict tend to keep away from one another as witnessed in *Forty Minutes*. These stage positions, movements, gestures and other corporeal exploits of animosity need to be transformed into those of embraces and close physical blocking to help reconcile antagonists. In both *Forty Minutes* and *The Broken Pot*, the performers move from the stage into the auditorium while carrying roses as symbols of peace. This movement, in Brechtian term, is 'quotable' as it bears the potential to provoke the spectators into thoughts of healing and reconciliation pegged on progressive memory. Summarily, the recurrence of symbols

of sad tales and the recurrence of their referents in actual life must be deterred; symbols of violence should be consciously replaced with those of peace if healing and reconciliation is to be realized.

As a unit, the various sections of this chapter have placed a premium on the performer insofar as convincing the audience into discourses and acts of healing and reconciliation is concerned. Even though Schechner (1968, 2002 & 2003) argues that all elements operate at the same level in a performance pyramid, the centrality of the performer stood out. Through interaction with and manipulation of its voice, props, backdrop, lighting, space and other stage craft elements, the performing body accomplishes healing and reconciliation mission both on and off stage. In order to influence the audience, performance theorists argue, “The performer need the seduction imparted by great acting performance” (Alter, 1990, p.44). This calls for credibility and believability (Schechner, 2003) in role play. The performer in real life whose speech acts are aimed at healing and reconciliation ought to achieve these discourses felicitously. In real life performance, impolite speech acts and wanting acting ought to be replaced with polite discourses and accomplished acting so as to show light in regard to healing and reconciliation.

The next chapter explores how the performance-texts use various staging elements/production techniques such as props, décor, costuming, lighting and sound for effect on healing and reconciliation.

CHAPTER FOUR: STAGING ELEMENTS AS FACTORS OF HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

4.1 Chapter Introduction

Having discussed the narrative contents of the performance-texts under study in chapter two and the acting process in chapter three, this chapter discusses the staging elements (production techniques) and their likely effect on healing and reconciliation. In theatre, production is thought of as the realization of the text (Schechner, 2003). Production entails blending of various audio-visual elements that characterize the theatrical space into a unified performance. Costuming, décor, lighting, music and other sonic effects, stage props and gadgets are examples of staging elements which are examined in this chapter for their mimetic and representational functions. The scenic view that these elements create in a production is largely for symbolic and aesthetic appeal. According to Turner (1974) cited in Moffat (2013, p.14), “A symbol is a thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing something [else].” This study regards any object, image, action and dialogue which have meaning beyond the literal self as symbolic (Di Yanni, 2007:1280). Aided by Schechner’s (2002) model of performance as a time-space process, this chapter evaluates these properties of theatre taking into account how their employment in the performance-texts reverberates on the healing and reconciliation course.

4.2 Costumes

Clothes that characters wear in everyday life acquire the term ‘costumes’ when they appear on a theatre stage. Performance theorist, Pavis (1998) contends that clothes become costumes as soon as they appear on stage and subject to, among other things, readability. Hilairie and Meyer cited in Dorson (1982, p.296) say, “Costume [is worn] for festival or ceremonial apparel and dress for ordinary wear.” In the Elizabethan period, wealthy lords and ladies donated their gowns to local theatres and in pre-colonial African theatre, masks and costumes were often part of the performance (William, Wright & Erik, 2012). At the KNDF which is the source of the primary data of this research, stage performers were found to use costumes far beyond the reason of covering of nudity. This view is in tune with the thought of Archer, Cynthia and Woodrow (1999) who describe clothing as “the scenery people wear” but which “become more than clothing” (p.214) if used on stage as costume.

Just as is in everyday life, “the costumes worn on stage tell the audience a great deal about the characters adorning them” (McCutcheon, Schaffer & Wycoff, 1994, p.569). If carefully designed, costumes can bring to light the personalities beneath them and because costumes project a character’s image, their use on stage should be purely functional so as to allow the audience insight into who the character is. Archer et.al (1999) argue that “Through the use of costumes line, texture, and silhouette, harmony or contrast can be achieved” (p.242). While some costumes might send signals of animosity, others might carry codes of peace and harmony. Thus, following is an appraisal on how costumes as texts within these performances and as signifiers of everyday life (Schechner 2002) contribute to the central concern

of healing and reconciliation. The discussion first looks at how the aggressors are costumed before looking at how agents of peace are costumed.

4.2.1 Dressing the aggressors

The politicians who incite the populace to violence in *Barabbas*, *Forty Minutes* and *Messiah*, are dressed in black to identify them as sources of wrongdoing. Black is predominant in the colour scheme of the characters who stir violent conflict thus highlighting their evilness (Stephen 1996). Captain Zakayo, in *Messiah*, is dressed in a black robe and a black feathery hat. In *Forty Minutes*, Professor and his henchmen are costumed as belligerents. Professor is dressed in a flamboyant and extravagant outfit. He is a portent of disaster between individuals and between communities because he incites his people to violently evict any 'aliens.' In *Barabbas*, Barabbas, is dressed in a broken suit the understanding of which is his damaged social standing. He has a black headgear, carries a flywhisk, is pot-bellied and casts the figure of a typical post independent African leader. The mismatch in his clothing aptly identifies him as the quintessence of violent conflict. Costumes have meanings both on stage and off stage where it serves as a reference to the real world (Pavis 1998). The fact that the inciters are dressed like post independent African leaders point to the political nature of healing and reconciliation. Rebuilding the nation requires the political input as much as it requires the individual resolve.

In *The Broken Pot*, the feuding Nakweya and Cheronno are set apart from the rest of the school pupils by their uniforms; the two are distinctive from the rest marking the tone of their rivalry. Nakweya, like other pupils, adorns a white dress striped with purple but unlike the others, has a red cardigan on top. Her colours, in

the context of the story, send signals of blood and fire. It is therefore not surprising that her thoughts are full of vengeance as she remembers how her father was killed and the pain which her mother had to go through to survive the fire burns. On the other hand, Cherono is the only pupil character dressed in a flame yellow school uniform; she is a class prefect. Cherono's flame yellow signifies fire and blood that was shed during the chaos. Both Cherono and Nakweya are in purple, an extension of their mournful state.

The agents of the warmongering politicians are painted as heinous by way of their costumes. In *Messiah*, the Bachui sailors are dressed in white trousers and leopard spotted vests. Contrarily, the Bamilia (Mnyonge and his brother) are dressed in white trousers and zebra crossed tops. By this differentiating costuming, the Bachui are coded as the hunter (leopard) while the Bamilia are their hapless hunted victims (zebra). As is the argument of Archer et.al (1999), costume can be used to distinguish classes and indeed, as a marker of identity and difference. As such, a character is united or contrasted with others. Director Joseph Murungu's clear cut demarcation in dressing of his characters is a conscious choice which not only identifies the sufferers from their perpetrators but also moves the audience to empathize with the victims. This emotional appeal has the potency to trigger compassion and understanding which if applied at the early phases of a conflict situation would arrest spiraling of antagonisms.

The attire worn by the police officers serves two functions: as costumes and as a reminder to the audience that the attire is indeed the uniform of the Kenya police force. Pavis (1998) argues that costume is used to identify a character in terms of age, sex, occupation or social status. In *Barabbas*, the police officers are dressed in

blue; an allusion to the Kenyan police whose uniform is of the same colour. In real time Kenya, which Ashitiva would like to point the audience to, men in blue are dreaded (Ndungu 2008) and costuming them so in the play makes the audience to easily strike a resemblance. The cops in *Barabbas* are presented as imparters of lore by any means necessary. The rioters too are shabbily dressed in black tops. Their seemingly worn out attire reveals the frugality and fragility of their lives as much as it does their hell bent resolve to create chaos. Professor's bodyguards in *Forty Minutes* are in dark suits and spot dark glasses. Their attire preempts their purpose in life; to darken it, from them can only be evil. The attackers who burn the IDP camp are hooded and are seemingly aware that their actions fall short of nobility but leans towards evil and wickedness. If healing and reconciliation is to be realized at any level, society must discard 'dresses' of barbarism but clothe itself, especially its leadership by 'garments' of warmth.

4.2.2 Costuming for Peace, Healing and Reconciliation.

The setting of *Messiah* by way of Captain Zakayo's costume can only be an imaginary place. Though Archer et.al (1999) contend that costumes can also define geography and set time frame or season, placing Captain Zakayo's costume does not look obvious in this regard. Given the sensitive nature of the issue of ethnic violence, Joseph Murungu avoids direct confrontation with any known ethnic or religious community's folk dressing code lest such prejudices boomerang on the play's philosophy of healing and reconciliation. Simply put, Captain Zakayo is dressed like a sailor; a ship's captain indeed. His hat which he keeps adjusting whenever he speaks to Maliako points to his authority.

Character transformation through costume is at the centre of dramatic conflict and its very resolution. Pavis (1998, p.82) says, “Discourse on action and character is communicated through the development of the system of costumes.” The performance-texts use costumes in a very dynamic way and each send signals which have relevance to healing and reconciliation. In *Messiah*, Maliako is presently dressed in purple, a colour of royalty. She is dressed like a queen unlike her former self; who was the shabbily dressed wife of Mnyonge seen in one of the flashback scenes. By changing husbands, albeit reluctantly, Maliako’s corresponding change in costumes highlight economic disparity as a possible source of conflict in the performance. Any meaningful effort aimed at healing and reconciliation must confront and address material disparities of the antagonists in conflict situations. To help heal the Bachui and the Bamilia, Captain Zakayo hands over power to Wanga. When he hands over power, he gives Wanga the royal robe and the royal hat. Furthermore, however absurd it might look, Captain Zakayo strips himself naked in quest for forgiveness as a means of opening a window for healing and reconciliation. Performance theorist Pavis (1998) says “a good costume reinterprets the entire performance through its shift in meaning” p.82). In this case, the royal garb exchanges its wearers within a single performance signaling a power shift. By removing his kingship attire and conferring the same on Isaiah, Captain Zakayo performs a reparation ritual which is intended to trigger forgiveness; forerunner of healing and reconciliation.

A negotiated peaceful and reconciled future is achievable if human behaviour can be shaped into those which are environmentally friendly. The notion of 'environment' as a performance space makes meaning for healing of conflicts on the staged theatre and the social environment (Schechner, 1968). In *Messiah* still, the medicine man that comes to treat Captain Zakayo's maladies is dressed in green; his herbalist attire defines his job and the healing that comes with it. His bag which contains the herbs meant to cure Captain Zakayo is green in colour. The dominance of green in the medicine man's costume, bag and his paraphernalia points to nature without which the future is bleak. This could be a pointer to home grown solutions to conflicts in society and an urge to the audience to "care for and maintain the health of the earth" (Roach, 1993, p.396). In a dramatic twist, the audience realizes that Wanga had disguised himself as the 'medicine man' to pull off this lesson on Captain Zakayo. It is instructive that the mettle is then handed over to the green dressed 'medicine man.' Murungu suggests that a cure for and treatment of human problems are in the environment.

Isaiah's costume in the flashback scenes in *Messiah* plays a symbolic role towards healing and reconciliation. He is dressed in full black, but curiously, with longitudinal white, green and red strips on one side. Strikingly, as is the argument of performance theorist Schechner (1968, 2002 & 2003) that theatre performance draws its material from the society; the choice of Isaiah's costume situates the performance of *Messiah* in a Kenyan context. Kenya's national colours, as is in the national flag, decorate Isaiah's attire. Through this branding, a reading of the little Isaiah as Kenya is emboldened and is informed by the thought that through costume, "a character wants the audience to believe about him or her" (McCutcheon et.al, 1994, p.558).

The director (Joseph Murungu) persuades the audience to view Isaiah as a stage metaphor for the Kenyan nation; the jewel that the protagonists and the antagonists have been feuding over but which they must now reconstruct in the aftermath of conflict.

In *Barabbas*, the judge wears a black gown and a white wig. On her is bestowed not just the legal but also the moral authority signified by a white wig on her head standing in for her grey hair. Eldership presupposes clarity of thought and mind the result of which should be a limpid society. To reconcile the society with itself, the judge is obliged to let the truth come out. The white covering in her head triumphs over any blackness. In the *Broken Pot*, it is only befitting that situations of dramatic conflicts involving Nakweya and Cheronno are calmed down by other pupils who are clad in white dresses; a symbol of purity, aliveness, truthfulness and peace (Courtney,1990; Stephen, 1996). The battling pair too welcomes this urge for peaceful coexistence as symbolized by the white ribbons in their hair. Healing and reconciliation requires transformation of conflicting thoughts and practices into open positive modes of expressions symbolized by the costumes which appeal for peace and harmony.

In *Forty Minutes*, the dress code assigned to Kwame, Daudi and their families suggest their eking out of life. Their identification as ‘the poor’ is radically opposed to their ‘richly’ costumed member of parliament; who looks inaccessible by his very dress. That this ‘low class’ identity is something that Kwame and Daudi have in common should be reason enough for them not to fight. Drawing from the same similarity, an identity of a shared future is thus suggested by Ashitiva. It is a future

that will discard the rags of violent conflicts but dress itself in garments whose imprints proclaim forgiveness, positive peace, healing and reconciliation.

In conclusion, this discussion has observed a fairly consistent and creative application of costumes not only as a way of character signification but also as a means of involving the audience and permitting comparisons with historical contexts (Pavis 1998). Costumes have been found to reflect character's disposition to conflict, violence, love, peace, healing and reconciliation. The denotative and the connotative perceptions inherent in these costumes have helped align characters either as aggressors, casualties or mediators in scenarios of violent conflicts. Similarly, character's roles are costumed to advocate or to work against healing and reconciliation. These symbolic costumes of conflicts and of peace engage the partakers of the performances not just during the performance but also in the aftermath; a period Schechner (2002) defines as "the continuing life of a performance" (p.246). The tenacity of such discourses would be to trigger actions that prompt healing and reconciliation in the afterlife of the performance.

4.3 Backdrop and Décor

At the KNDF, artistically painted boards or pieces of canvas (backdrop) are often mounted at the back of the stage as part of scenery. On the rear side, the décor furniture or piece of canvas creates a room for backstage operations. In addition, the artistically painted front view (décor) can help in communicating pertinent production ideas. A stage composition speaks volumes and as Chuck and Rob (2006) note, "The set jumpstarts the audience by giving them visual information besides the characters' dialogue" (p.73). This study construes décor (decoration) as a picture of the stage appearance which in effect "provides the visual context for the action on

stage” (Stephen, 1996, p.19). These visual pictures are often symbolic. In its usage, in this study, set assumes a broader meaning which encompasses décor; stage gadgets, objects and the acting spaces. Schechner (1968) on whose theory this research is based, says that the environment gives a performance its place. Most importantly, this study is interested in how the construction of set, in a broader sense, contributes to the theme of healing and reconciliation.

KNDF performances are staged inside theatre halls with sets which are hardly moved for the entire period of a particular performance. Teams are given a very limited time (often less than five minutes) to set the stage. This dynamism makes teams use easy to carry sets like plywood and pieces of canvas. Since the set cannot change much, the décor becomes instrumental in telling the story, providing the environment or showing changes in the same (as one canvas may be pulled off to reveal another one underlying it to show a different setting). Teams therefore resort to spontaneity to help communicate their thematic concerns. This thought is corroborated by that of Schechner (1968) who posits that a performance environment can be created out of improvisation. How all these play out in relation to the topic of healing and reconciliation is an exploration this study now turns to.

The backdrop created by the artistic and aesthetic painted boards placed behind the performers help to define the setting of the performances as conflict sites. In *Messiah*, at the stage back right, is a décor of a sea whose water mass reflects and is connoted by the blue sky. The visible strong waves and the dark clouds which hung potently, in the imaginative paintings, reinforce the play’s turbulent mood against the supposed calmness and tranquility implied by the blue water. These tidal waves heighten the tension in the story; the hatred between the Bachui and the

Bamilia. The sea and the ship are bare essentials which induce a consciousness of the locale they imply; a society in transition but whose voyage is shrouded by uncertainties of sailing.

Through symbolic representation, the past can be acknowledged and the future designed. Symbols are powerful modes of communication because “they condense and carry a range of notions” (Moffat, 2013, p.15). These notions, though, must be those which the spectators can relate to and derive meaning from. In the scenery of *The Broken Pot* are images of homesteads neatly laid up in what looks like an African village setting. On the stage right are images of a broken pot that is surrounded by a blazing inferno. The contents of the broken pot are splattered across and blood flows freely from the broken pot. This picture summarizes Nakweya’s sad tale: she once had a family but the family was torn apart by the violence which broke out. During the violence: lives and property were lost, and felonies were committed against women and girls. The society was in effect assaulted, its beauty raped and its amity severely compromised. There are paintings of fire and smoke mounted on the stage left and images of guns rifting a pot apart. Guns are thus communicated to be weapons of violence and destructions threatening the very existence of the calm lying villages. The symbol of the broken pot and the accompanying dialogue plays back memories of the past thereby ‘recalling the truth’ (Holland, 2006, p.183) about the violence. These pictures ‘visually reinforce’ the performance concern of identifying the root causes of conflict so as to fully comprehend the task of healing and reconciliation. These images are necessary to the extent that they bring the society to its present need for peace, tolerance, forbearance, healing and reconciliation.

The manifold nature of symbols not only allows symbols to bear potential varied meanings but also to transform behaviour. The essence of a symbol is not just dependent on meaning but also on “the power [of symbol] to produce change” (Moffat, 2013, p.15). In *The Broken Pot*, noteworthy too is that there are images of flowers and of calm environments. These symbols of tranquility bestow better alternatives which Wenceslaus Masinde, in his play *The Broken Pot* desires as the production embarks on transforming not just Nakweya and Cherono but also the members of the auditorium. Having fed the spectators with the truthful past defined by symbols of conflict, truth now persuades that “we dismiss old symbols” and embrace a new label by “expressing ourselves in new symbols” (Holland, 2006:183) of peace; flowers and beautiful gardens. The task of a symbolist theatre for reconciliation is to use symbols which have potential to transform behaviour from cultures of abhorrence and violence to cultures of tolerance in the face of conflicts.

Forty Minutes’ décor, largely a diamond shaped pattern which alternate between black and red colours hedged in by white colour, is symbolic of the Kenyan nation through the national flag. Alongside green: black, red and white are Kenya’s national colours all of which are present in the national flag. Red on the décor could be referring to blood split both in the imaginary and real world whenever there is armed conflicts. In the performance, Daudi loses blood and Kwame’s son dies just like Kenyans lost lives during the 2007/2008 post-election violence. Black could be defining the African ancestry of the players involved in the conflict. At another level, because “symbols are necessarily fluxional in their meaning and use” (Holland, 2006, p.189), black could be spelling the heinous acts of felony committed against

humanity. Symbolic approaches to peace building, Lisa(2005) mentions, include efforts to shift perception through creative strategies.

Conspicuous in *Barabbas* is the hangman's noose painted on each of the two centrally placed boards at the back of the stage. Placing the noose in that position attracts and bolts the spectators focus to the object. It seems that the director's root to healing and reconciliation is the transitional justice way whereby real perpetrators of atrocities face their victims and suffer for their evil. On the stage right is an artistic painting of a city, the seat of power, surrounded with a bungalow and a ritzy car parked beside. A sign post reads, "PROTECTED AREA, NO TRESPASS." This demarcation portends the divide between the rich and the poor signaling the cycle of conflicts in search of some balance. The boards placed on the stage left, though scanty of details, are descriptive of economic depravity. The juxtaposition of affluence and poverty to provide symmetry in design communicates the director's concern that confronting economic imbalance can be an antecedent of conflict in society.

Apart from specifying the setting, the décors have been used to define parties in a conflict. In *Messiah*, there is portraiture of a zebra which is contrasted with that of a leopard. Coupled with costuming is an interpretation that identifies the Bamilia (zebra) as a weaker animal. On the other hand is the tagging of the Bachui (leopard) as one of the predators of the jungle. The Bachui are thus presented as the aggressor and the Bamilia their hapless victims. While the director could have merely meant to identify the two groups, another possible reading is one that leads to stereotyping the players involved in a conflict. The danger is that this kind of labeling may also serve to intensify animosity between the antagonists: as continued isolation remains a

possibility. The use of colours and paintings that denote these animals and the creative manipulation of bamilia (zebra) and bachui (leopard) in tagging sides in a conflict is a counterproductive artistic choice which might lead to stereotyping and widening of social gap. This might be used to justify hatred and atrocities against others. From a theatre stage, the symbols which the audience ought to transfer to their real lives are those that have “the greatest potential to offer society a mechanism for [socially approved] change and unity” (Ronald, Jackson & Michael 2010, p.812).

The décors of these performances are not all doom and gloom, they provide hope which heralds peace. In *The Broken Pot*, the flourishing green vegetation cover on the stage right can only signify the desired peaceful future over and above the fire and smoke covered décor mounted on the stage left. The violent images in *Forty Minutes* are eclipsed by the painting of a white dove; a symbol of peace and restoration which is strategically placed above them. Even though Archer et.al (1999) argue that “scenery does not necessarily demand beauty in the usual sense” (p.232), the painting of the dove looks pleasurable and thus adds gratification to the theatrical production. This foregrounds director Ashitava’s delight in the role of the dove as a harbinger of peace, healing and reconciliation. Symbols which breed positive relations are useful in confronting conflict amicably. Ross (2009) argues that such “symbols establish or strengthen a link between previously divided people” (p.217).

4.4 ‘The Prop’s the Thing’ for Healing and Reconciliation.

In theatre parlance, a stage property refers to objects used by actors in the course of performance so as to enhance communication. According to Archer et.al (1999) stage props refer to “all items of furniture, ornament, or decoration on a stage

setting, plus any objects handled or used by the cast during a performance” (p.252). On terminology, this research uses the terms ‘object’ and ‘prop’ interchangeability particularly in this section just as theatre scholar Pavis (1998) does in his Dictionary of The Theatre: Terms, Concepts and Analysis. In agreement with Sofer (2006), it is not just the manipulation of the object by a performer that makes it a prop but equally important is its perception by the spectator as a sign. This means that the spectator has to believe the object. This belief partly lies in the spectator’s preconceived knowledge of the object in question within a cultural set up. Secondly, the acceptance of the object as prop derives from its functionality within that particular performance.

Overall, props occupy an important place in a production and can either build or “destroy a scene or an entire production” (Bland, 2010, p.10). As symbols, these objects are culturally biased and so their encoding by the theatre creator and their decoding by the theatre spectator must be within context. A culture edifices a symbol so that the symbol is experienced and communicated in a network. Without a context, a symbol has no meaning (Courtney, 1990). The context orientation of symbols comfortably sits with the performance theory view that each performance is unique to itself; that a performance can properly be understood on its own merit within its own space and time. However, it has to be noted, there are certain theatre symbols whose meanings transcend cultural boundaries. Though each conflict situation may require unique symbols as strategies for managing the same, the application of similar devices to other situations of disequilibrium remains an option.

Performance theorist Schechner (1988) says that during a performance, objects are of extreme value and among other functions, they articulate the space. Considering that dramatic action by design “bestows symbolic meaning on any linguistic or non-linguistic” (Courtney, 1990, p.121) items in its repertoire, the following discussion now turns to the significations on the healing and reconciliation process of such objects as: gun, sword, blood, cross, noose, dove, and the rose flower.

4.4.1 Gun and Sword

As an exemplification of theatrical language, the object of the gun is a universal symbol whose meaning, however, cannot be preconceived but must be decoded within context. The four performances under study, for various purposes, use the object of the gun. There seems to be some nexus among texts on the use of gun. Apart from being applicable in different theatrical performance situations, the object of the gun transcends the fictional world and finds its usage in the everyday life performances. The notion of the gun, just as other objects, possessing a trans-performance resonance is in tune with Schechner’s (2002) principle of performance as “a time–space sequence composed of proto-performance, performance, and aftermath” (p.225). Thus, the object of the gun and its symbols has the potential to provoke debate about conflict, healing and reconciliation not just in these fictional performances but also in the life of the object after the performance.

In theatre and in everyday life, a gun can be viewed as a tool that is used to intimidate, threaten, extort, harass, maim or kill. In other contexts, a gun can paradoxically be used as a sign of authority and order that restores peace. For example, armed security officers can help achieve ‘negative peace’ by creating a

buffer zone between warring groups. The gun's textual relevance thus supersedes its primary purpose of killing. The discussion on the gun and other weapons follows this dichotomy of function: first, as a tool for conflict and, secondly, as a tool for achieving stability.

The guns that Professor's bodyguards in *Forty Minutes* wield so casually and which one of them uses to shoot Daudi are objects whose presence on stage heighten situations of dramatic conflicts. In *Forty Minutes* the gun is used as an instrument of murder. The same can be said of the machete that Daudi possess; he once raised it against Kwame and when he dares the Member of Parliament with it, he gets shot. In *The Broken Pot*, guns and sticks are weapons of violence. Disgusted with Cherono, Nakweya attacks her former friend with a rod; a weapon at her disposal. In her view, a rod is a handy weapon for settling conflicts: albeit violently. Cherono's father shoots Nakweya's father using a gun. In *Barabbas*, the guns and stones that the security officers and the rioting mob use respectively against either side are props that fuel violence. As props, these weapons have been used to "explore the interpersonal dimensions of the conflict such as feelings and attitudes" (Latif & Janet 2005, p.276). By juxtaposing the weapons used by the players in this violent conflict situation, Ondiech Malala seems to suggest that both the aggressor and the victim are culpable; involving both parties in healing and reconciliation endeavours becomes part of the process.

The use of a gun in a theatrical work, Sofer (2006) says, "Is a threat and a promise to the dramatic plot" (p.168) and the same can be said of its application in the performance-texts under study. The shooting incident in *The Broken Pot* is not enacted live on stage but partly through flashback and narration. The plot of *The*

Broken Pot is a continuous struggle aimed at uncovering the source of the current conflict between the two girls. The shooting of Daudi in *Forty Minutes* influences the plot of the performance thereafter; he is taken to the hospital and once there, he requires a blood donation. This necessity compels his wife, Janet, to ask Kwame to donate blood; a request whose fulfillment leads to cessation of hard feelings between Daudi and Kwame thus giving way to healing and reconciliation. In *Barabbas*, these props (guns and stones) propel the dramatic conflict towards its denouement. As already discussed in chapter two, the enactments of these police brutalities bear a resemblance to real time Kenya during the 2007/2008 PEV. When the police open fire on the demonstrators, the spectator is drawn to start thinking that the story is hitting its climax but with the same token towards its dramatic end (Sofer 2006). The dramaturgy and its pacing up of these performances from conflict exposition to resolution mirrors the urgency required in managing of conflict in a post-conflict society.

The stage action of drawing a sword, in the context of *Messiah*, is loaded with meanings of intimidation, violence and war. Thus, a sword has been presented as a weapon of destruction. The Bachui carry and use swords to attack and slit Mnyonge's tongue in *Messiah*. When they spot the Bamilia as they (Bachui) are about to embark on the sea voyage, they draw their swords in spite of Maliako's plea that they hold their peace. When they find the medicine man next to Captain Zakayo's cabin they rough him up to a point of temporary unconsciousness. Sadly though, the curtain closes down without a change of function in the use of the sword from a destructive prop to a constructive prop and this means that behavioural change is thus to be pilloried by other elements of production. Dramatically, the

sword becomes a necessary tool since it has to excite violence and be used to cause destruction away from which there is need for reconciliation.

The use of the guns, sword and other objects of aggression add to the memory of the conflict in these performances. Through the effect of the gun and the memory of the execution, hatred between Nakweya and Cheronon is created in Wenceslaus Masinde's *The Broken Pot*. The rising action of the plot is partly impelled by the object of the gun which causes the death of Nakweya's father. This tragic action would later build to the ultimate animosity between Cheronon and Nakweya, erstwhile friends. In *Forty Minutes*, when Professor points a gun at Daudi, the said object "plunge the characters and spectators into the past" (Sofer, 2006, p.170). Daudi now sees the gun as what was used to create a wedge between his friend and him. Significantly, his transformation pushes him to abhor violent conflicts. In *Barabbas*, the evidence adduced in court during the trial confirms the use of gun to exterminate a population. The memory of that execution proves pivotal in the determination of the case. To the spectator watching these performances as they were being staged, the sight and sound of guns in scenes of ethnic and political violence witnessed in *Forty Minutes*, *The Broken Pot*, and *Barabbas* could possibly bring back the haunting memory of the 2007/2008 Kenya's PEV which was still fresh at the time of these staging. By means of gun and sword props, violent conflict is identified as an issue which must be addressed when speaking about reconciliation.

The gun object on stage has a binary function: destruction and peace. A gun is not just an icon of death but, as noted by Kempe (2002), it is also "possible to see a gun as a symbol of peace" (p.141). The dynamism in the use of stage props in terms of what they represent as seen in the performance-texts under study pose challenges

which a critic of theatre, just like other spectators, has “to learn to read critically” (Clar, 1993, p.30). *Forty Minutes* presents the double use of the gun as a weapon in a conflict situation. It takes the arrival of the gun wielding policemen to save Kwame from Daudi’s raised machete. At this point, while the gun is a threat to Daudi and his fellow aggressors, it is the savior for Kwame. The salvation path seems to be the persuasion of Ashitiva as Kwame survives the violent conflict though with bruises. Getting drugs for treating such contusions constitute the healing and recovery processes.

In conclusion, this discussion on weapons as hand props and as symbols within a cultural context on a theatrical stage has observed a twofold role of the objects. On the one hand, Weapons [of guns, swords and sticks] “became props in a performance of aggression” (Schechner, 2003, p.125) as tools of murder. On the other hand, the gun has been employed as an instrument of peace and security. To the extent that the gun serves to protect and guard human life or rights it remains a tool whose presence in a post-conflict situation reassures the victims that the future is safe. Creating an attitudinal mentality capable of reconstructing these violent conflicts populated with guns into positive debates capable of transforming behaviour into socially acceptable norms remains a task for national healing and reconciliation efforts.

4.4.2 Blood

For ethical, safety, emotional and such like reasons, real human blood is hardly shed on stage. Yet, screen and stage writers envisage in their scripts the visible use of blood in the fictional performances. This calls upon the directors to be creative given the necessity of some scenes and the challenge that comes with the

actual realization of such stage directions. Consequently, there has been use of ‘stage blood’ as an alternative to real blood. Stage blood hence refers to any substance used, on stage or screen, in place of the real human blood. As Cornford (2006) argues, blood just like other props or costumes in itself is not important but only draws its value whereupon it shoulders a theatrical utility. This discussion pursues, at this point, the stage value of blood in relation to the concept of healing and reconciliation in the performance-texts under study.

Blood transfused into the system of a bruised person literally replenishes and heals the wounds of cuts. Scientifically, blood carries with it a variety of substances: oxygen, nutrients, water, drugs all of which protect and heal one from diseases (Harvey, 2012; Zdanowicz, 2003). While lying on a hospital bed, the patient Daudi receives a blood donation from Kwame. This transfusion resuscitates Daudi who had been in a comma; thus breathing into him a new lease of life. Decoding blood as a symbol in this context would inform a presupposition that Daudi has been healed of his past malevolent thoughts and acts by the blood of the very person he had wanted to slay. Ashitava’s “stylized blood” (Woodworth, 2010, p.11) abstracted by use of red ribbons which connect the donor and the recipient, creates “make-believe” (Schechner, 2002, p.35) for the audience. Creation of such a reality not only makes the character’s performances credible but also has the potency to evoke the standard human reaction to blood of making the adrenalin flow (Gurr, 2006). From a performance theory perspective, the reality of the blood donation and the subsequent reunion between the two characters is fairly schmaltzy to inspire analogous acts of benevolence even to those who have wronged one before. Performing similar acts of

tolerance in everyday life especially in a post-conflict situation closes the space for mismanagement of conflict but opens room for healing and reconciliation.

Sharing of blood between former adversaries suggests the sturdiest of reunions. The 'stylized blood' in *Forty Minutes*, serve the stage purpose of not just transfusing blood but also of bonding the hitherto antagonists. In what performance theorist Schechner (2002, 2003) would consider as a ritual, there is an oath-like blood transfusion from Kwame's body to Daudi's and this action ironically saves the latter's life. The director seems to mock the linguistic 'blood is thicker than water' proverb which Daudi had invoked earlier to forsake Kwame and replaces it with the phrase 'blood brothers.' Kwame foregoes a pint of his blood willingly and this contradicts an earlier situation in which Daudi had wanted to sacrifice his friend. This shared blood, Ashitiva could have meant, cleanses the society of its past evils committed at the zenith of violent conflict. This cleansing takes away feelings of guilt, sets both the aggressor and the victim free, and allows healing and reconciliation.

Even though the violent scenes in *Barabbas*, *Messiah* and *The Broken Pot*, imply shedding of human blood on stage, blood is not materialized in these three productions. This is probable because the fatal shootings (*Barabbas*, *The Broken Pot*) and the stabbing in *Messiah* are executed away from the audience thus hiding the details. Again, in the thoughts of the concerned directors, such inclusions would not bear any theatrical signification. As already observed, blood is only treated in *Forty Minutes* as a prop. Avoidance of use of blood as a prop in the three aforementioned performance-texts could also be understood as emanating from the KNDF campaigns against creation of bloodbaths (Adjudication Report, 2008) on stage for such would

make ‘blood chill’ in some members of the audience, especially the young primary school children. Ashitiva’s improvisation of blood, by way of red tapes tropicalizing the blood being transfused, is not only cost-effective as per KNDF campaigns (Adjudication Report, 2007 & 2008) but also augments the theme of reconciliation by giving Daudi a chance in life to learn the folly of his irrationality and to renew his friendship with Kwame. As a performance ritual, Kwame’s blood donation is a goodwill gesture capable of arousing reconciliation among the spectators.

In conclusion, blood as a stage prop is all-encompassing; it has a wide range of effects and readings. Semantically, blood can define hatred among characters as is in the expression ‘bad blood between individuals’ or express family ties as in the phrase ‘blood brothers’. In a post-conflict situation, turning of negative meanings exhibited in the heat of the conflict into those of positive relations becomes a task cut out for reconciliation theatre. That kind of theatre would transform blood thirsty and cold blooded characters from drawing or spilling blood to donating blood. This would lay ground for feelings of compassion which eventually will flow in the veins of healing and reconciliation.

4.4.3 Cross

Even before Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross to save mankind, the cross was already in use either in religious or secular functions. According to Guilley (2006), the cross had existed in ancient civilizations like Greek, Egypt and Rome many centuries preceding Christianity. In each of these societies, the cross symbol was in use to serve various purposes including flogging wrongdoers. Today, the cross in a church symbolizes Christian dogma, the Red Cross a medical connotation and in Poland the cross represents a political philosophy (Mach, 1993). Thus, the

cross just like other symbols can only be comprehensively read within context. Of the four performance-texts under study, *Barabbas* uses the wooden cross as a stage prop and it is the task of this discussion to interpret it in the light of healing and reconciliation.

The cross is a symbol of suffering, torture and oppression. The seemingly heavy cross that Sergeant Philemon carries as he walks onto the stage through the auditorium is a load that bears not only on him but also on the audience. The use of the cross this early in the performance is a “reflection and refraction on the dramatic meaning” (Macki, 2010, p.68). Ondiech Malala guides the attention of the audience towards the truth behind the established suffering. In actuality and as was like the suffering of the biblical Jesus on his way to Golgotha, the cross is heavy and burdens Sergeant Philemon; he intermittently stoops and staggers under its weight. Sergeant Philemon is to hang because the masses shout for it. At this point, “the cross is a murderous gallows of terror and oppression” (Moltmann, 2006, p.259) primarily designed by the community to punish perpetrators. The cross, Trelstad (2006, p.1) argues, “Reinforces both victim passivity and violent oppression.” Sergeant Philemon’s altruism and travail (considering his later acquittal) placed upon him by the cross he is carrying are meant to help his co-performers and the spectators to establish “reality through the eyes of suffering and therefore to address the worlds needs [for healing and reconciliation] compassionately and appropriately” (Trelstad). Through this cross, Ondiech Malala not only communicates the burdened situation of its bearer but also goads the audience into thought and response. A call for national healing and reconciliation needs to look at the collective historical memory replayed by the symbol of the cross.

Other than being used as a tool for causing affront to others, the cross symbolizes atonement and reconciliation. The biblical Jesus Christ carried the cross on behalf of the sinful man and as Paul writes (in col.1:20), “Christ made peace through his bloodshed on the cross.” The understanding is that the cross reconciles man’s liabilities by paying humanity’s debt of sin thereby preparing the ground for a reunion between God and man (Rita, 2006). At the beginning of the performance of *Barabbas*, the masses are glad to have Sergeant Philemon carry the cross because they don’t want to face the truth; that their wealthy master Barabbas is indeed the cause of strife in society. As such they would rather sacrifice Sergeant Philemon who readily accepts to carry a communal weight on his shoulders. That he readily confesses his evil deeds and accepts to suffer the consequences is a call to guilt consciousness of the stage and auditorium spectators. Sergeant Philemon’s gesture gives the masses room to redress mob justice they are about to administer. That the community finally acquits Sergeant Philemon of his on-the-cross charges attests to the potential of the cross as a symbol of resurrection and restoration. Theatre as intervention ought to heal the wounded psyches and repair the damaged associations.

In a nutshell, the symbol of the wooden cross - which in this production is made of a long horizontal timber of about six feet and a short vertical one its half joined to it at the top - functions doubly in *Barabbas* just as it does in Richard Wright’s novel Native Son where it is both a symbol of life full of suffering (for Reverend Hammond) and a symbol of racism (for Bigger Thomas). In *Barabbas* the cross epitomizes the trials and tribulations of Sergeant Philemon as much as it offers hope, mercy, forgiveness and empathy all of which are key subjects of healing and reconciliation.

4.4.4 Noose

If a rope is looped against itself at the top by way of a knot, it forms an adjustable circle. With this knot, a rope turns into a noose; an object whose perceptions vary. The hangman's knot or the hangman's noose is synonymous with strangulation. The noose as a symbol readily evokes, within American context, memory and history of racial hatred and captures the desire of the white supremacy to annihilate the black body (Dianne, 2012). However, in *Barabbas*, there are no such racial prejudices but the use of the noose certainly bears some implication. The discussion that follows tries to interpret the object and symbol of the noose in relation to healing and reconciliation.

The hangman's noose is a heightened icon in the play *Barabbas*. Its presence from the beginning of the play to the end not only progresses the plot by creating anxiety but also "has the potential to inflict the pain that accompanies the actual act of violence" (Macki, 2010, p.70). The noose is centrally hung high at the back making it noticeable to both the characters and the spectators. It evinces crowd violence and manifests mob justice system. The noose is suggestive of transitional justice in a post conflict society. The supposed offenders are condemned to hang. The danger of this as evident in *Barabbas* is that the wrong ones might easily find their way there whereas the villains go scot free. This therefore calls for careful interrogation of the narratives which attempt to identify the perpetrators of violence.

The noose is a symbol of pain and anguish; it denotes death, the death that the guilty faces. As the performance begins, Sergeant Philemon is on a death row and not Barabbas but at the end of the performance the reverse is the case. The noose just like the cross brings back memories of torture; it reminds the actors and the

spectators of lives lost over the period of violent conflict. The noose, because of the meaning of hanging which co-exists with it, passes as a representation of punishment. A basic principle of justice expects that the offenders are chastised for their anti-social behaviour. The use of the noose in *Barabbas*, however justified, serves as a closure of life; it does not give the condemned Barabbas room to correct his misdeeds. Even as society pursues those who cause infliction of pain in its midst, there is need to embrace, ritualize and communally perform nonviolent responses to harm as a sure way of gifting itself with an opportunity to heal and reconcile its own nation.

Interestingly, the object and symbol of the noose just like other symbols has the capacity to bring about conversion and unanimity in society. Because Sergeant Philemon has been let off the hook regardless of his past misdemeanors, his spirit and body will now perform in tandem with the collective spirit. He has been accepted back into the communal fold which is guided by rules. This social order which the society tries to restore marries with the rule principle of performance theory which states that any public performance can only proceed on conditions of some rules or conventions (Schechner 2003). Theatre performances assigns roles and rules derived from the society (Alter 1990) and non-repentant transgressors like Barabbas stand excommunicated. While it is necessary that theatre for reconciliation acknowledges diversity in society, its task lies in fostering a just and collective blueprint upon which the future can be framed. In this way therefore, *Barabbas* as a performance-text which uses the noose as a stage object and symbol, has the potential to stimulate dialogue around transitional justice as a medium through which healing and reconciliation can be achieved.

4.4.5 Dove

The conspicuous weaponry of violence in the four performances under study is sharply contrasted with those of peace, healing and reconciliation. Whereas guns, swords, and rods have been applied to escalate tension among characters on stage (as much as they do in real life) the same performance-texts offer alternative to this brutal mechanism of dispute resolution by way of props. The use of the dove prop is explored in this section and that of the rose flower in the succeeding section. The two are discussed, separately, within context in respect to their universality as signifiers of peace.

The image of a dove and its human equivalent cast a meaning that is synonymous with peace and conciliatory advocacies. Understanding the dove in this light is backed by existing literatures. For example, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary gives two definitions of the word dove: one, a small bird related to pigeons and secondly, a person who does not want war and does want peace. This view is in concordance with the affirmation of Elaine and Savana (2013) that “the dove is a symbol of peace” (p.6). According to Michael’s (2007) Dictionary of Literary Symbols, the dove has been a symbol of love. Elaine and Savana say that either in customs of ancient period or classical poetry of Shakespeare, Keats, William or Milton the dove is used, though to a varying degree, as a symbol of love. The dove’s ever presence in *Forty Minutes* is a constant reminder of hope and peace amidst despair and that by the power of a prop, conflict can be resolved.

In Christendom, the dove symbol embodies the Holy Spirit; a mark of innocence, purity and holiness (Cheryl, 1986). In *Forty Minutes*, the dove image curved out of a piece of board is deliberately suspended at stage back heightening its very prominence. This towering setting aligns it from the evil down below and goes ahead to claim its innocence in so far as the atrocities are concerned. On the other hand, a high up physical placing could suggest the unassailability of purity by mankind. The dove came from the deities (after Jesus Christ had been baptized) and in *Forty Minutes* it is likely to take a return journey without perching on the ground. Granted, the performance-text could be conceding that ‘holiness’ only belongs to the deities. Perhaps, the director wishes to remind the audience to rethink the high moral ground. This scenario strikes a resemblance to a situation in conflict scholarship in which the term ‘conflict management’ is preferred to ‘conflict resolution’ on the score that human conflicts cannot be completely solved but can only be managed even if it means to lower levels.

As a symbol of harmony, the dove contributes to healing of wounded souls especially so in *Forty Minutes* where the director places it above the sick Daudi’s bed. To Daudi, the dove is a messenger of hope and a promise of life. It has come to elevate Daudi’s spirit from its current sickness and to brighten his face amid his sorrows. This magical power of the dove is alluded to in the bible where upon his baptism Jesus “saw the spirit of god descending like a dove and lighting on him” (Mathew, 3:17 New Revised Standard Version). The dove, using the Christian example above, has been equated to god and thus has a healing and protective power. Whenever he looks at Daudi lying on a hospital bed, Kwame’s sight is drawn to the dove and this symbol contributes to his transformation. The universal appeal of the

dove as a symbol of peace and harmony pricks his consciousness. It is probable the image of a dove together with its cooing voice (though unheard on this occasion) plays a role in the reconciliation between Daudi and Kwame and through which Ashitwa provides a reconciliation blue print for the audience.

4.4.6 Rose Flower

By description, rose is a flower that grows in the wild, comes in different colours including red and white, and is related to the lily flower. History of rose in the European tradition dates back past the Roman Empire while its use in western Asia and northeastern Africa is as early as over 5 000 years ago (Mia, 1982). In Christian symbolism: rose is an expression of divine love, is synonymous with the Virgin Mary and is equated with Christ (Mia, 1982; Clare 2014). Mia adds that romanticist poets like Shakespeare and Yeats invoke the symbol of rose around the theme of love. The present discussion is interested in how *The Broken Pot*, in its performance, uses rose as a prop so as to impact on the subject of healing and reconciliation.

In *The Broken Pot*, rose adds to the memory of the violence that was witnessed in the imagined world of the performance. It serves as a reminder to the actors and the audience how far they have come. This view is derived from Christianity where, according to Stewart (1998, p.336), “The five petals of the common rose are associated with the five wounds of Christ and red rose a symbol of the blood of martyrs.” In his Dictionary of Literary Symbols, Michael (2007) says that the rose has two traditional enemies: worms and winds. In the light of healing and reconciliation, these agents of destruction could collectively be viewed as encompassing violent (verbal and physical) forms of conflict handling. The choice of

white rose in *The Broken Pot* and not red one (which in Christian mythology represents blood of martyrs) is a covert appeal by the director to the audience to shun violence. In a fully healed and reconciled society, members pursue socially acceptable means whenever their opinions differ.

Apart from reminding the audience of the thorny past, the rose is also a symbol of love. According to Stewart (1998), rose is associated with the Venus-roman goddess of love. In Christianity, “rose is appealing and associated with the passion of Christ” (Seaton, 2012, p.43). For those who believe in it, Valentine’s Day is marked by lovers giving red roses to each other as a sign of love and romance. Though performers in *The Broken Pot* exchange a white rose, the spirit and sensuality of the occasion is one full of love and affection because Nakweya and Cherono have forgiven one another. By rediscovering the love that once existed between them, the two girls are able to reconcile their differences. That the performers give out roses to the auditorium is a suggestion by Wenceslaus Masinde that restoration of relationship following a wounded past is never an individual process, even for the individuals (Rita, 2006) but a collective exercise.

Rose as a flower and as a plant has a medicinal value: it treats and heals diseases. János (2008) documents the hygienic uses of rose in ancient Rome. Among the Aborigines of today, flowers are used as herbal medicine (Rita, 2006) just as Maliako rubs leaves on Messiah’s wounds in *Messiah*. Physically, rose is not applied to any literal wound in *The Broken Pot* but carries a symbolic signification. It is a mark of healed wounds that now allows Nakweya and Cherono to be the best of friends once again. As is the practice in everyday life where the sick are offered a bouquet of flowers to wish them a quick recovery, this gesture is meant to urge the

Kenyan spectator to come over the perils of 2007/2008 PEV. In any case, performance theory, upon which this close reading is based, holds that “society’s mini-dramas are a direct source of theatre performances” (Alter, 1990, p.46).

In the context of healing and reconciliation, feminine association of rose makes it a sign of rebirth, renewal and continued ‘holy’ existence. In western tradition, “the rose is usually the emblem of femininity (sic) or feminine values” (Seaton, 2012, p.39). In Christianity, the rose is likened to the Virgin Mary (Stewart 1998). In poetic language, Stewart says, “The female sex organs are alluded to as a rose” (p.336). Mapping these linkages to *The Broken Pot* reveals the director’s call for: beauty in life as is the flower-described paradise, devotion to social order, positive growth and development in everyday life. This means that society can get out of any muddy situation and model a better tomorrow the very way the bible says, “The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1). Like the proverbial phoenix bird, Nakweya and Cheronno have scabbed off their knees and moved on; putting the past behind them and nurturing a future devoid of barbarities.

Overall, the rose prop as used in *The Broken Pot*, does not just serve decorative purposes but offers therapeutic appeal. “Single [white] roses symbolize completion, achievement and perfection” (Stewart, 1998, p.336) and the same are replicable in healing and reconciliation. The rose in meaning, colour or parts is representative of love, healing and reconciliation between contrasting groups. That the play *The Broken Pot* was performed by primary school children make their resolve to cultivate peace believable. The youthfulness of the cast tallies with the short botanical period under which the rose is known to blossom. The implied

honesty, drive and future suggest that issues of healing and reconciliation ought to be dispensed with expeditiously.

4.4.7 Other Props

Besides the already discussed props (gun, sword, blood, cross, noose, dove and rose), there are other props which equally add to the totality of the performance-texts under study in respect to the subject of healing and reconciliation. These are rostrums, walking cane, matchbox and petrol. Each of these props is discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

In theatre, the term ‘rostrum’ describes “a platform which can be placed in a performance space to give added elevation to an area of the stage” (Martin, 1998, p.229). The rostrums at the KNDF are often constructed by use of timber and have steps which create varying heights. The versatility of a rostrum on a theatre stage makes it an important prop. It can be used as: a chair, table, bed, vehicle, house, platform et cetera (Reid, 2007). In *Messiah*, there are two rostrums placed strategically on the stage middle right and middle left and on each of them is drawn a human head whose details are a hat, nose and the eye. The focus here is that the violence was caused by the short sightedness of the crown. Each time Captain Zakayo speaks to himself, his shadow comes from below these rostrums. This device allows the audience to interact with Captain Zakayo’s interior conflicts; the thoughts of the ideal Captain Zakayo. At this point, the rostrum becomes a stream of realization: consciousness-raising strategy. The levels therefore are not just platforms upon which characters stand to elevate their heights and social statuses but are also “crucial to the construction of the dramatic plot” (Curry, 2010, p.6) and its rallying

call that for proper healing and reconciliation in a post-conflict society, the leadership ought to be visionary.

The walking cane as a prop points to the groping in darkness of its bearer. Joseph Murungu's blind Captain Zakayo in *Messiah* no doubt uses a walking cane as a tool which aids his mobility. At another level, this prop could be a physical reminder of the darkness that shrouds a leadership devoid of vision. It points to the horrors of yesterday the result of which is a curse of blindness which serves both the literal and the literary meaning. No doubt then that Maliako blames Mnyonge's incarceration on Captain Zakayo's political blindness. It is he (Captain Zakayo) who had incited the Bachui to attack and maim Mnyonge. To achieve any form of healing, the society must be awake to elements that might lead to tension.

Matchbox and petrol are used in *Forty Minutes* to propel the dramatic plot towards its search for healing and reconciliation. Daudi and his co-arsonists surround St. Monica's Christian Centre where Kwame and other IDP's are camping, pour petrol on it before striking a matchbox which sets the church ablaze killing many people including Kwame's only son. The arsonists then make exits as their targets cry for help. The production does not create fire as prop but its existence is nonetheless masked. According to Barasa and Minishi (2004), masking can be used as a technique for enacting frightening and gory scenes like that of murder. Such choices are meant to filter the grotesque. To the Kenyan spectator, the object of petrol on stage not only creates the solemn mood but also brings back the sad memories of 2007/2008 PEV in which people were burnt by their attackers in a church (Klopp & Githinji, 2010). This painful narrative has to be told, in this case by use of stage objects, if the nation is to be healed from it.

In conclusion, even though KNDF administrators dissuade directors from heavy, excessive and extravagant use of stage props and gadgetry (Adjudication Reports, 2008, 2009, 2013), these elements have always found their way to stage and whenever they do; they convey certain theatrical images pertinent to those productions. Indeed KNDF encourage a minimalist approach and improvisation given the budgetary constraints facing schools (Adjudication Reports, 2009, 2013). Performance-texts of *Messiah*, *Barabbas*, *The Broken Pot* and *Forty Minutes* have shown the dualism in function of stage props in relation to healing and reconciliation. The gun, sword cross, noose, matchbox and petrol are largely viewed as escalators of tension. Secondly and contrariwise, the dove and the rose have been read as symbols whose desired ultimate uses uphold peace, healing and reconciliation. Both groups, however, collectively combine aesthetic concerns and the healing and reconciliation concepts to argue for a closure of the (violent) conflicts. These objects as symbols have served to reinforce the verbal symbols and collectively augment the healing and reconciliation call and practice. Taking it from Courtney (1990) that all signs are symbols, stage props – as signs - are unique to each performance situation. The notion of inimitability of performance is transferrable to conflict management situations where it gives benefit of hindsight with regard to specific strategies for solving specific conflict situations.

4.5 Lighting Healing and Reconciliation

Lighting refers to all elements which contribute to stage illumination. Literally speaking, lighting enables the audience to perceive with their eyes the visual theatrical elements. Archer et.al (1999), Hischak (2005), Fazio (2013) and Steven (2014) argue that stage lighting, though scientific in nature, has artistic goals chief amongst which is to provide focus by lighting characters, objects and areas of the set so as to enhance a performance concept. Stage lighting has a spectrum of tools, methods and strategies to choose from: floodlights, key lights, limelight and others. However, all of the performance-texts under study (just like most performances at the KNDF) were performed during the day. Equally, at the KNDF, natural light is preferred because it costs nothing. In the light of performance theorist and practitioner Schechner's (2003) rider that "lights... can make or break a show" (p.62), the discussion in this section pursues how lighting goals communicate the subject of healing and reconciliation in the performance-texts under scrutiny so as to elicit responses from the spectators on the same.

Violent conflicts and moments of disputes in general are performed under a shadowy darkness to suggest the directors' dim view of violent means of conflict resolution. In *Messiah*, the curtain opens when the ship is about to anchor and is performed with the stage lights off making the stage area of Lohana - the hall which hosted this performance - dark. This portends the obscurity awaiting Captain Zakayo and his voyage. It is therefore not surprising that the members of the enemy tribe refuse to shake hands with them and are ready to attack them. At this point, the Bamilia reject Captain Zakayo's peace token and it is visible in all the dull and overcast lighting elements: dim lighting, the dark painted clouds that hang on the

décor creating an impression of darkness, and Captain Zakayo's own black attire. In *Forty Minutes*, Nelson Ashitiva uses props to demarcate night from day just as Chuck and Rob (2006) argue that "lighting can be used to establish the time of day, whether it's an interior or exterior location" (p.92). By using black clothes which have the moon and stars painted on them, the director is able to communicate that violent aggressions occur in the dark. By performing such acts at night, the perpetrators are guilty of their own evil deeds long before they commit them. Current efforts aimed at healing and reconciling society, Ashitiva suggests, need to find a way of dimming and eliminating the dark forces.

The pointing gesture of lighting has been used to make the audience alive to the difficult mission of healing and reconciliation. In *Messiah*, the lights move from partial darkness with which the play started to full brightness when one sailor says, "Look, the Bamilia are now attacking us." The conflict is in the fact that the Bamilia are intent on attacking yet Captain Zakayo goes to them in peace. By this lighting design Joseph Murungu directs Captain Zakayo, the other cast members and the audience to the impending attack. This is what Fran (1995) calls, "Using light to create focus not only for the characters but also for the audience" (p.234). Surprisingly, even with the lights on, Captain Zakayo can't see because the king is blind. It was his political 'darkness', at a time he still had his sight, which has given rise to the present pathological violence. His current blindness both literally and literarily means that he has no sense of light. Of interest to theatre peace builders is that at the end, Captain Zakayo says that his eyes are not looking outwards but inwards. If the Captain Zakayo's in the auditorium would, out of introspection, make a concession of a dark past, then there is light at the end of the tunnel. Advocacy for

peace, harmony, reconciliation and search for a new identity shall have been re-energized.

Beguilingly, some ill-boding scenes are enacted in the piercing full glare of stage lights to beam the need for healing and reconciliation. The cold blooded murder of Mnyonge and other acts of violent assaults in *Messiah* are committed with 'lights on' reflecting for the audience such realities. On the other hand, such lighting design may amount to glorification of the very anti-social behaviour they set to deride. By implication therefore; the violent flashback scene in *Messiah* ought to have been performed under dim light thereby adding to the condemnation of the ominous and gory acts of aggression which the scene graphically unfolds. This argument is strengthened by McCutcheon et.al (1994) who suggest that a somber and gloomy atmosphere could be created by the darker, more shadowy lighting. Such a lighting design would radiate to the audience the director's preference of social justice to wrongdoing.

Noble actions which buttress the argument for mutual coexistence in society are revitalized by lighting elements. In *The Broken Pot*, light shines brightly upon the well whose water is to nourish the rose flower of peace. The flower, which at this point the director uses to symbolize the girl child, had been plundered and had had its petals plucked by violence. The light which presently sparks on the well and the rose from an aerial angle draws the audience's attention to these symbols of revival. The increased radiance on the aforementioned complements "visibility and emphasis" (Fran, 1995, p.234) of the audience on the new peaceful lease of life. In the similar vein of enhancing assuaging words and actions, the performance of *Messiah* could have lit the reparation scene. Focused and sufficient illumination, Reid (2013) says,

achieve positive visibility. Putting Captain Zakayo in the limelight as he asks for forgiveness and as he seeks reconciliation with the people he once tormented would not only glitter the core concern of the play; peace, healing and reconciliation but also carry light's potency of positively manipulating the mental and emotional shapes of the audience.

For the case of performance-texts under study, the natural light that comes onto the stage via the hall's ventilations and stage lights generally served to illuminate the optical elements of theatricality. That these performance-texts were found to be about healing and reconciliation, as vindicated in chapter two, means that the lighting system which was available to each performance facilitated the audience's reception of the same. The failure of the performance of *Barabbas* to manipulate stage lights should be understood in this light. When the texts under study were performed, KNDF - as is the practice at the national level- did light the stage primarily for purposes of illumination. Noteworthy too is the fact that performances at KNDF are, by rule, during the day: hardly do they spill into the night. However, some of the performance-texts under study went further by mounting additional lighting systems and maneuvered them for effect on healing and reconciliation. By 'darkening' the violent scenes, the directors seem to dissuade the audience from such acts of barbarity. On the other side, Schechner (2003) says, "Intensely focused lighting draw the spectators in close" (p.83) to virtuous displays which illuminate healing and reconciliation.

4.6 Sonic Components as Scenery for Reconciliation

Other than appealing to the eye, stage scenery can also be set so as to appeal to the ears of the audience. Away from characters' dialogue which also appeals to our sense of hearing, performance-texts under study designed sound in three ways: sound effects, recorded music and live singing on stage. In one way or the other, these elements help to "create an audio environment" (Archer et.al, 1999, p.233) within which the performances take place. Schechner (1968, p.59) says, "Production elements function operatically", all joining together to make one statement. Schechner adds that music is designed to help create the actor's make-believe and that music is one of theatre's "mechanisms for transformation" (p.91). Based on Schechner's position, this study investigates how, at the very least, "sound design adds value in communicating the meaning of a play" (McCutcheon et.al, p.1994:569) and how "sound reinforces the spoken word" (Rita, 2013, p.366) in relation to healing and reconciliation in the performance-texts under study.

Music and other sound effects are used to recapture melancholic moods of the past thereby reinforcing the thought that (violent) conflict can wreck a society. In *The Broken Pot*, the cacophonous sounds of guns rattle the air and eventually break the delightful play between the two girls "punctuating action as much as they establish mood (McCutcheon et al, 1994, p.249)." The atmosphere, as the two girls go separate ways, becomes turbulent and disturbed. Similarly, as the IDP's (mostly women and children) trek home, the *Thula Mama* Song plays to the rhythm of their footsteps adding to their sympathetic situation. *Thula Mama* which translates into "quiet mama" (Cherry, 2011, p.29) is a South African folk lullaby which in its original apartheid context offered comfort and solace to mothers (Friedmann 2013)

whose male kins were being lost to apartheid. Just as was in its original context, the song is performed by children showing their awareness of their harsh environment. ***Thula Mama*** is a mellifluous andante that gives hope to the grieving Nakweya. The boon of African music, according to Malisa and Malange (2013), is in its uplifting capability regardless of its sad tales. In the audience are thus provoked emotions of piety by a combination of picture and sound.

In *Barabbas*, the protesters chant war songs as they lay their lives on behalf of their master. These chants as a prelude to violent engagements bill into Schechner's (2003) proto-performance principle of performance theory. These 'rehearsals' set an unruly aura, and charge the demonstrators to get into the spirits of battle. Jiwe, a university leaver, leads the rioters as they chant 'comrade power' reminding the audience of: the black power solidarity call for the emancipation of the blacks in USA (Rabaka, 2011), the insurrection of the masses in the Russian and Chinese revolutions (Michael 2011), and the street demonstrations by university students in Kenya against perceived state oppression. In such a theatre performance, songs in support of a violent leader like Barabbas draw attention away from his brutalities (Elizabeth 1990) and add to the hollowness of the group solidarity of the aggressors. These war chants have been used to indoctrinate, psyche, mobilize, and to bind the youth to the nefarious courses. They also reaffirm the thought that at times of conflict; both sides of the divide are blameworthy. These violently laced choruses avoid the path of amicable resolutions of conflicts which otherwise ought to have been pursued. The arson scene in *Forty Minutes* is underscored by a fast and strident soundtrack which is low enough not to unnecessarily distract the audience from the explosion of petrol and the wails of the attacked. Again, the director uses

incoherent sounds to accentuate Daudi's shooting. In these instances, musical sounds bear testimony to trauma and become a repository (Lizelle & Stephanie, 2013) for theatre-inspired conflict management mechanisms.

Music aids the recall of history of conflicts reminding the audience of the wounds of violence. The aforementioned suggestion is corroborated by Gray's (2008) view that "music is useful in creating the authentic picture of the past" (p.64). In a flashback in *Forty Minutes*, the Kwames' scamper for safety in Daudi's house, dogs bark as sounds of gunshots rent the air at night; the ominous is thus imminent. These sounds come off the computer and the natural vocals of the backstage crew and their beats increases each time tension intensifies in the narrative. When Daudi is challenged by his brother to prove his loyalty to the tribe by cutting his friend Kwame to pieces, a soft Kiswahili song resonates in Daudi's mind rekindling in him memories of his friendship with Kwame. The song whose free verse translation is provided goes thus:

<i>Rafiki yangu mpendwa</i>	(my dear friend)
<i>Naja kwako</i>	(I come to you)
<i>Siku nyingi wanipokea kwa uzini.</i>	(You always welcome me when I am in trouble)

The flashback scene that reveals how the Bamilia people were thrown out of the ship in *Messiah* is accompanied by a sad tune that rings in the ears of the spectators. The beating of Mnyonge until he is left for the dead, the taking of his wife by Captain Zakayo and the eviction of the Bamilia populace from the ship are hard realities that must just be thawed by music in their retelling. These sounds rise to a crescendo when underscoring an action but falls to diminuendo when backing up

dialogue. To this extent, music has also been used to soften souls in scary moments and this explains music's usefulness in easing of tension in conflict situations

When music enhances a charged and tense atmosphere, it amplifies the dramatic conflict as much as it can escalate social strife in everyday life. In *Messiah*, the wedding ceremony between Captain Zakayo and Maliako is performed with a sentimental tune in the background. Probably, it is because this marriage is borne out of emotion and not reason that the director uses it as a catalyst to the dramatic conflict; it escalates the enmity between Bachui and the Bamilia. *Barabbas* does not employ the use of music soundtracks but have a group of singers behind the stage (and sometimes on stage). Though this is an effective approach which takes care of technical uncertainties, the vocals are disjointed. However much this could be an artistic choice signaling the discordance in society which reconciliation efforts need to pay attention to, the singing is poorly coordinated to the extent of hampering delivery of the lyrics so contained.

Besides serving transitional function between key actions/scenes in the performances under study, music by way of its lyrics fortifies certain positions which shape healing and reconciliation. In *Barabbas*, just before Sergeant Philemon begins his confession the director treats the audience to a song:

<i>Aombi ruoth jwarna</i>	(I beseech you our saviour the king)
<i>Dak iromna ruodha</i>	(Why don't you come back)
<i>Mondo itera piny mawendo</i>	(And take us to a new world)

The use of a church hymn in this context seems to create group solidarity by welding people through their spirituality (Tillman, 2004). Through love, peace can be built and society reconciled. However, the song rendered in Dholuo sums the apathy of the masses; they have resigned to their fate unless help comes from the skies. This song provides a bridge between reconciliation and history (Gray, 2008; John, 2001,) by tying Sergeant Philemon's present sad road to Golgotha and the sorrowful confession about to unfold. Further, that the song is sung in Dholuo raises a conundrum of artistic choices because the performance does not establish the antagonists or the cast to be speakers of that language. The power of music as a peace building resource, Cohen (2008) argues, lies not in its universal appeal but rather on recognition of the distinctive meanings that emerge from it in place and time. The meaning that Cohen talks of semantically precludes, in the case of this song sung in Dholuo, a section of its audience. The universality of music, its creation of mood in this instance and Ngugi wa Thiongo's fronting for the use of African languages in literature notwithstanding, this study contends that the issue of reconciliation is so paramount that its methods must not defeat its purpose. If the purpose is to heal and reconcile the entire nation, then theatre elements which purport to fulfill such undertakings ought to reach out to the entire nation without causing any linguistic strain.

Just like poetry, music expresses inner feelings and in situations of renewed relations music crowns ecstasy of such joyous achievements. The long awaited and purposeful handshake, the hug and the ultimate reconciliation between Nakweya and Cheronno in *The Broken Pot* are smoothed with *We are the World* song. The performers' movements towards an embrace only commence when the music starts

to play. At this point, the song, originally composed by Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson and performed by a host of artists from diverse backgrounds, is played. The title *We are the World* appeals to humankind to make not just Africa for which it was originally meant but the entire world a peaceful and better place to live in. Wenceslaus Masinde ‘frames’ this song as a commentary on the drama of violence, healing and reconciliation. As part of the entire performance of *The Broken Pot*, this song lends “the affirmative power, non-violent power of music... and the nuanced complexity of musical symbols to efforts [aimed] at reconciliation” (Cohen, 2008, p.27).

Music contributes to the envisaging of a desired future where life is peaceful and harmonious; a reconciled society. In contrast to violent passions, rugged scenes and discordant music which fuel conflict, blood transfusion in *Forty Minutes* flows at a regular rhythm to a beat from Kwame’s veins to Daudi’s. Imperatively, for the period of blood transfusion and the eventual hugging and handshake the characters do not engage in any dialogue but only act amid and in response to a regular pulse of the music of the heartbeat. This important mark of forgiveness that opens the door for healing and reconciliation is performed with music in the background.

In *The Broken Pot* Wenceslaus Masinde “uses music as a curtain raising mood-setter” (John, 2001, p.120) for the performance of *The Broken Pot*; the curtain opens to a happy mood set by a merry-making Scottish tune. The spectators watch Nakweya fantasizes not just about an ideal world but also about a life she once lived. Her remembrance of the nonchalant coexistence between Cherono and her is tuned to the Scottish music which rhymes with the peaceful past and which the director of the play envisages for the future. The two children play and dance in harmonious, serene

and sweet environment. In any case, in Schechner's (2003, p.21) performance, "there is no separating of dance, music and theatre." As Tillman (2004) argues, "Music restores lost unity" (p.210) through composition of tolerant communal configurations. These harmonious musicals replace dissonances of the past. Melodies of music, song and the often accompanying dance can be created to functionally set the tone for love and healing of the nation.

The discussion in this section has lent credence to the power of music to appeal to the soul and mind so as to arrive at meanings aimed at reconciliation. The discussion has appraised the expressive and dramatic power of music in helping performativity (Schechner 2002, 2003). In contrast to Tillman's (2004) assertion that "words divide [but] sounds unite" (p.210), this discussion has demonstrated that music reinforces theatre's efforts to repair damaged relations in society. As was the case with South Africa where anti-apartheid songs were tuned anew so as to agitate for reconciliation (Gray, 2008), 'musics' of these performance-texts show a commitment to this call. Whether as a tool for emotional manipulation or as a dialogical commentary, music has been used to engage the spectators on issues of national healing and reconciliation. The ultimate goal is to have the single notes of individual memories of the past be in tune with a polyphonic texture; an identity the society presently requires.

4.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has observed that characters that aggravate conflict situations in the performance-texts under study are richly dressed in black. This portrays their greed for more resources and for which they incite their political vanguards to acts of violence. To the contrary, agents of harmony like the pupils in *The Broken Pot* are

associated with and are dressed in white. Costuming identifies the salient idea that resources ought to be availed to all as a strategy of avoiding cycles of conflicts. “Theatre includes mechanisms for transformation” and that “at the level of staging there are costumes and masks” (Schechner, 2002, p.191). These changes communicated by way of costumes, “help maintain the balance of the whole system” and “are in the service of social homeostasis” (Schechner, 2002, p.191).

On objects and props as symbols, this chapter found out that stage props can either nourish or berate conflicts in society. Pavis (1998) affirms that the stage object has multiple meanings and levels of apprehensions. This flux nature of symbols set the tone for the eventual reconciliation between the adversaries by evoking a discourse. The dove and the rose flower in the context of *Forty Minutes* and *The Broken Pot* are figures which metaphorically reinforce peaceful coexistence in society. These performance-texts have manipulated the symbolic objects to generate meanings and to reinforce the spoken word in contributing to reconciliation process. To paraphrase Holland (2006), messages about reconciliation are made vivid, joyfully received and remain etched in the minds of spectators if they are availed in the clear and simple light of their symbols.

The section on sonic components has shown the need for use of music, sound and songs to create harmony between the individual inner vibrations and the resonances of others in society. The collective tune, even if plural (given the multi-chorded nature of music, theatre and performance theory), ought to be one whose timbre suffuses the air with waves of healing and reconciliation. As Barasa (2004) observes, giving people a tune is a gesture empowering them to dance their problems away. As a text unto itself or as part of a play performance, music has the force to

harmonize varying voices and synchronize discords “because it can facilitate communication, understanding and empathy across differences of all kinds” (Cohen, 2008, p.26). The power of music to involve a varied audience (Elizabeth, 1990) appeals to their affective and intellectual fields in tackling questions of healing and reconciliation. The spectators can’t help but empathize with victims of violent conflicts when their dire narratives are told amid music. Performance theorist and practitioner Schechner (2003) says, “The blending of theatre, dance and music [in a single theatrical performance] yields experiences that dissolve differences” (p.345). The new found rhythm of concord whirls away those of discord.

Equally, this chapter has favoured the argument that in a theatrical production, stage lighting works past illumining characters. While violent scenes are performed under dim lights, those which heightened forgiveness, healing and reconciliation received significant intensity. This communicates the directors’ persuasion that conflict should be managed in a truthful, open, light-hearted and healthy way.

Generally, this chapter has established that within a theatrical space like the KNDF, scenic design does add value to a production’s philosophy by not merely creating the setting but also by intensifying a performance concept. “All the production elements speak in their own language” (Schechner 1968:591) and all contribute to wholeness of a performance. Costuming, lighting, stage properties and sound designs have been used in these performance-texts as approaches for unwinding the healing and reconciliation plot. Mapping Schechner’s ‘twice behaved’ principle of performance theory results in an argument that the audio-visual set of these performance-texts have ‘theatrically modified’ the topic of healing and

reconciliation while still allowing the audience to relate these experiences to their everyday lives.

The next chapter is a summary of the discussions in this study, makes conclusions and does recommendations for prosperity.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

As observed in chapter one, this study sought to probe theatre for national healing and reconciliation in Kenya using KNDF's performances of *Barabbas*(2009)by OndiechMalala, *Forty Minutes*(2008)by Nelson Ashitiva, *Messiah* (2008)by Joseph Murungu and *The Broken Pot* (2010) by Wenceslaus Masinde. In order to spawn gist out of these theatrical performances, this study invoked performance theory and the application of linguistic speech act theory to theatre. Whereas theatre performance theory enabled understanding of the fictional works in relation to everyday life in real world, pragmatic speech act theory was critical in viewing utterances spoken by characters as verbal acts whose meanings have effects on healing and reconciliation.

While theatre is agreeably consumed as a whole, this study segmented the performances into three broad units of: narrative content, actors/actresses performances and production techniques for purposes of a deeper understanding of the various components of theatrical language. Nonetheless, these constituents were found to work and contribute to the central concept of the entire theatrical production. Their usage by way of creating moods, defining spaces and conveying meanings would either cultivate or constrain efforts aimed at national healing and reconciliation.

5.2 Findings

In chapter two, this study noted that the narrative contents of the performance-texts were crafted so as to have a bearing on healing and reconciliation. These performance-texts, whose plots were segmented into scenes which built onto one another in a cause and effect relationship, were commendable enough in their communication. Against the backdrop of violent conflicts, the narratives told stories based on history and memory. This, though, gives rise to a conundrum of sorts. In each of the performance-texts, there were competing narratives. In the context of healing and reconciliation where recourse to justice is an option, there is need for the interrogation of these parallel and contrasting narratives. Finding the ‘truth’ through theatrical re-enactments of past stories of conflicts is one stride which enhances healing and reconciliation quest. Equally, memory that wants to heal and reconcile the individuals and the collective in a post-conflict society needs to bear resemblance to the truth of the conflict.

The performance-texts addressed themselves to causes of (violent) conflicts mirroring Kenya’s 2007/2008 PEV chaos. As such, they raised issues which hinge on the need to adequately attend to issues of economic imbalance, historical injustices, negative ethnicity and political representations before people are even asked to heal and reconcile. As corroborated by Caplan (2010), “attempts at reconciliation in Kenya must be accompanied by a concerted effort to address the problems that over time led to the sorts of fractures that were witnessed in 2007/2008” (p.255).

Chapter three which dealt with the performances of the actors/actresses observed that the stage acting of these performance-texts made considerable appeal towards the make-believe principle of performance theory.

Though not professional actors, the cast in each of the four performance-texts were clear enough in voice and credible in movements so as to communicate their pieces on healing and reconciliation. Antagonists in conflict situations were found to speech act aggressive language, and used gestures, body movements and tools which only added to more tension.

On production techniques, discussed in chapter four, the performance-texts were found to make use of various staging elements which collectively argued for healing and reconciliation. Observed was the duality in use of costumes, décor, props, lighting and sonic elements. As symbols, these elements were found to bear potential to transform behaviour from cultures of abhorrence and violence to cultures of tolerance in the face of conflicts. Symbols which breed positive relationship are useful in confronting conflict amicably. Ross argues that such “symbols establish or strengthen a link between previously divided people” (2009, p.217).

5.3 Conclusions

Resolutions of these dramatic conflicts contain elements of truth, memory, evidence, forgiveness, amnesty, reparation, confession, expiation and justice as subjects of healing and reconciliation. As such any meaningful theatre for reconciliation should allow the victims and their aggressors to come face to face with the materiality of memory (Odhiambo & Nkaelah, 2008). By way of narration and flashback, *Barabbas*, *Forty Minutes*, *Messiah* and *The Broken Pot* bring back to life the atrocities which lay bare the histories of their fictional worlds. Kenya as a nation could benefit from this too. “Without this recounting of the conflict, it would be difficult to reflect on Kenya’s peace, healing and reconciliation” (Nyokabi, 2010, p.191). However, this looking back should only be in order to have a better

understanding of the present (Mda, 2002). The future generation must not be yoked by errors of their founders.

The resolution of the play *Barabbas* presents a challenge in relation to healing and reconciliation: drawing a line between seeking justice and applying revenge becomes obscure especially in the absence of a confession from the oppressor. Barabbas refuses to acknowledge guilt and maintains that he is innocent yet the stage and auditorium spectators are already privy to the truth that he is indeed guilty. In the absence of a performed confession, reconciliation seems a failed exercise in *Barabbas*. For meaningful reconciliation to sprout the “political class must climb down the denial pedestal” (Caplan, 2010, p.251). In spite of his denial, the community takes charge and in a public court condemns him (Barabbas) to hang. This action brings to fore the right the community has to safeguard itself from violent aggressors and agents of conflicts. The offender, Barabbas, is made to bear the responsibility of his actions. However, the role of the community to put to shame acts of criminalities should not blur its duty of enabling a reestablishment of ties. This gained voice must not be used to blow away an opportunity for contributing to the project of nation building.

Reconciliation remains a mere illusion if left to the mercy of fate, chance or circumstances. The aggressors in *Barabbas*, *Forty Minutes* and *Messiah* who in these cases wield power and influence only reach out because they find themselves in discomfort. Captain Zakayo in *Messiah* seeks peace because he needs his sight back. In *Forty Minutes*, Daudi needs a blood donation from Kwame; somebody he had wanted to kill during the skirmishes. Such scenarios might lead to forced reconciliation. In *Messiah*, such a process may possibly convince the victims about

the genuineness of the entire process that Captain Zakayo engages in. Meaningful reconciliation could be achieved if the aggressor were to show remorse for the victim.

From a performance theory standpoint, the process of signification in theatre includes the spectators. Theatre spectators are not passive recipients of information but remain alive to various mechanisms that aid a theatrical experience. Besides other things, performance theory is concerned with reception of information and the effect of the same on the audience. Speech act theory's illocutionary and perlocutionary conditions equally pay attention to the force that utterances have on hearers. The real task lies not in sending of signals having content about healing and reconciliation but in making artistic choices that would create effect that would themselves in turn transform behaviour of both the stage spec-actor and the auditorium spec-actor. Bukenya (2014) while acknowledging the importance of technique, structure and linguistic aesthetics in a literary piece does admit that the ultimate value of literature [and other media forms like theatre] lies in their contribution to the transformation of society and mankind. This power of transformation, for purposes of healing and reconciliation, can be enhanced if the audience is critically involved in a performance.

The public staging of KNDF performances make them appeal to the national audience and give the audience space to deal with their emotions in respect to similar circumstances which might require a response to healing and reconciliation in everyday life. Creating a theatre for national healing and reconciliation does not in any way subvert reconciliation at other levels. The individual pains and sufferings which were manifested in the violent conflicts become part of a shared identity. The

points of departure between Nakweya and Cheron in *The Broken Pot*, Captain Zakayo and his ‘enemies’ in *Messiah*, Daudi and Kwame in *Forty Minutes*, and the antagonism between Barabbas and his people in *Barabbas* stretch beyond these individuals. The eventual reconciliation between these adversaries is a pointer that the same is replicable at other succeeding levels since characters can be viewed as representations of ideas and communities. As noted by Schechner (2008) what is “set and automated at the micro level is voluntary when embedded in larger sequences of behavior” (p.780).

This study concludes that the KNDF theatre space, among other things, provides an arena for engaging discourses around national healing and reconciliation in a post conflict society. To echo Mda (2002), Njageh (2009), Odhiambo (2008, 2009, and 2011) and Zelizer (2010), KNDF as a ground for theatre for intervention provides a platform for mirroring healing and reconciliation that would suffice in the real world. By giving insight into fictional yet relevant worlds, the performance-texts of *Barabbas*, *Forty Minutes*, *Messiah* and *The Broken Pot* give a safe space for facing the causes of violent conflicts as was witnessed in Kenya after the December 2007 polls. Further, these creative performances map strategies for forestalling future eruptions while at the same time offering options for navigating our ways towards reestablishment of relations: for only then can any slice of reconciliation be realized. Reconstruction plans for Kenya’s post-conflict new identity should explore the theatre space which plays a critical task in improving attitudes of forbearance, conflict management and healthy emotions.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendations for Further Research

i) In the course of this research, the centrality of language in compositions of particular outlooks about conflict on the one hand, and peace, healing and reconciliation on the other became apparent. While exploring language use in the performance-texts under study, this analysis noted the potentiality of humour in spurring healing and reconciliation. This study suggests an in-depth academic research on language and or its various forms as vehicles for national healing and reconciliation.

ii) In terms of reception of information, this study limited itself to the effect of theatre signals on the stage audience. Further research could be placed on the effect a performance of theatre for reconciliation has on the auditorium audience. A number of enquiries can be studied: did the audience feel compelled to act in a certain way after watching a particular performance? Under what socio-economic conditions would they fathom healing and reconciliation? Who are the agents of healing and reconciliation? Are they women, youth, the common man, the political class, or the civil society?

iii) The third objective of this research which dealt with staging elements (production techniques) could be further broken down for more detailed academic research. Scholars might study into detail how the fields of: costuming, music, lighting, backdrop and décor contribute to a play's central theme.

5.4.2 Recommendations for the general public

To forestall future animosities, the general public through this research, are advised to foster mutual coexistence through their language and action. Borrowing from the fictional worlds read in this study, conflicts can be managed amicably. Creative choices used in resolving dramatic conflicts would equally drive similar thoughts in managing conflicts in real life.

Discourses of name calling, stereotypes, hatred and annihilation need to be eliminated and replaced by discourses of politeness, friendliness, remorse and tolerance. Hate speech and other forms of linguistic violence which seek to silence, marginalize, destroy and deprive a community of its voice (Cortese, 2006) are symptoms of social disorder. The learning inherent in speech act theory is that each speaker has control over his/her utterances. As such, it is possible to transform discourses of negative display to those of positive peace and of social desires. By changing from hurtful language to healing language, dialogue will be enhanced thus giving reconciliation a chance.

Again, victims of violence should be given an opportunity and necessary support to rebuild their lives in society. Meaningful and reconciliation ought to offer the victims some sense of hope away from the past conflicts.

5.4.3 Recommendations for policy makers

This study makes a call for more partnership between relevant agencies and the KNDF so as to equip drama trainers with appropriate knowledge and skills that would see into the staging of advocacy performance-texts aimed at healing and reconciliation and other desired social behaviours.

Finally, Because KNDF operates under the auspices of State Department of Education, Science and Technology, this study suggests the inclusion of peace education in the basic education curriculum so as to create more awareness on issues of peace, healing and reconciliation.

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